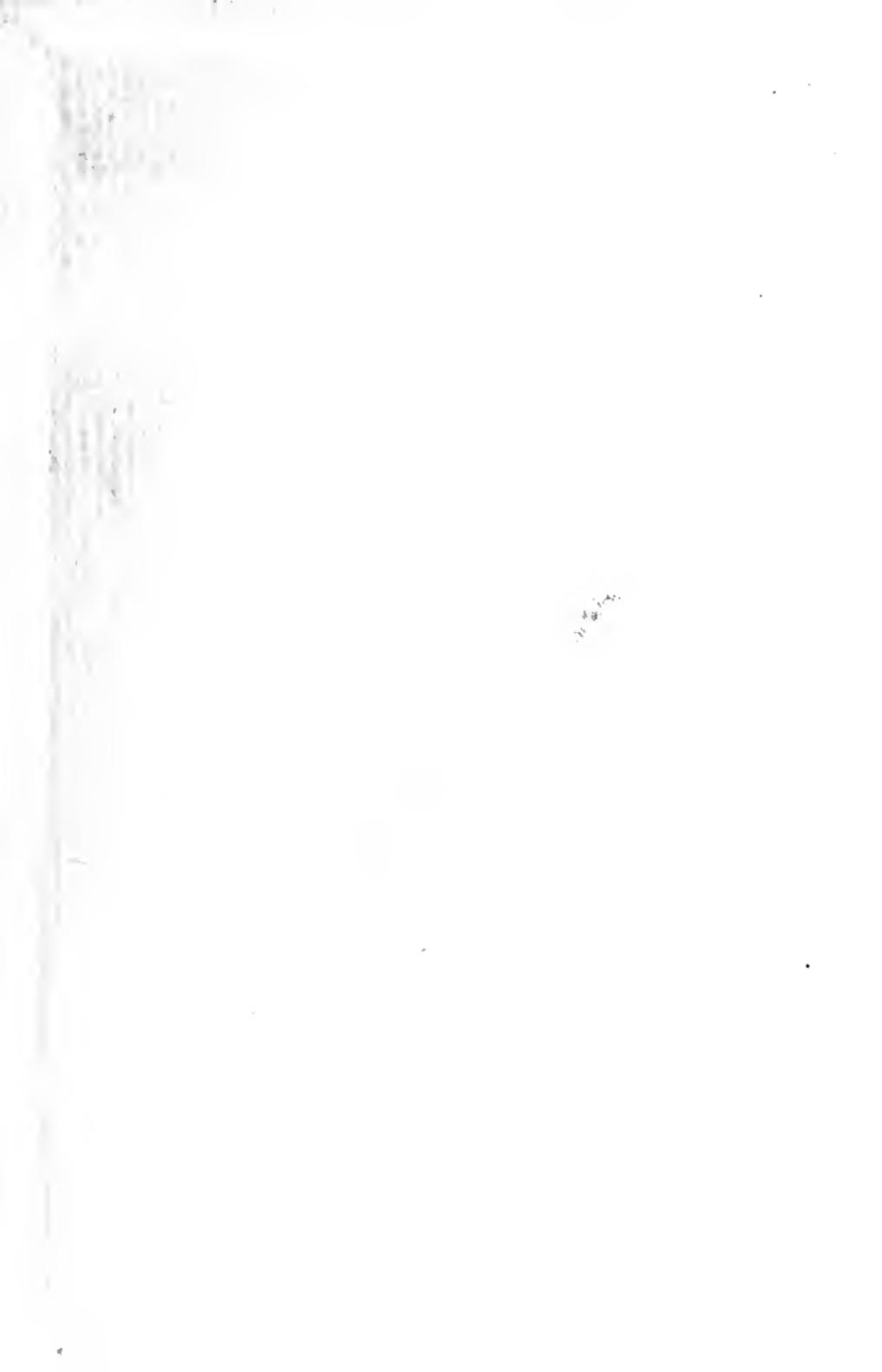


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THE CONDITION
OF CATHOLICS
UNDER CHARLES II

COMTESSE DE COURSON



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The Condition of English Catholics under Charles II

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THE CONDITION
of
ENGLISH CATHOLICS
UNDER CHARLES II



By the
COMTESSE R. de COURSON

Translated and amplified from original sources by

MRS F. RAYMOND-BARKER

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PREFACE

IN "Quatre Portraits de Femmes" we endeavoured, in a very simple form, to make the land of our adoption acquainted with some unknown episodes of the glorious drama of the persecutions of the English Catholics. The same motive inspired the present sketch, first published in France for French readers, and now, at the request of friends in England, reproduced in their own tongue.

We find various phases in the course of these persecutions.

At times, an interval of comparative calm, often due to political reasons, held in suspense the sword always unsheathed in readiness to strike the Papists.

At other times a plot, real or pretended, served as a pretext for measures of the utmost severity and sent many innocent men to execution.

Such was the dark drama which disgraced the reign of Charles II and of which the history is here related.

Never perhaps was more clearly shown to what excesses of injustice and cruelty a nation may be driven by religious bigotry.

The narrative of these events, in which absurdity and horror are so strangely intermingled, would well-

nigh overpower the reader with indignation and disgust did he not behold, bright amid the surrounding gloom like stars in a storm-swept sky, so many consoling examples of grand and simple heroism.

“More and more stars, and ever as I gaze,
Brighter and brighter seem.”

By the side of the pusillanimous king who suffered so many innocent persons to be put to death, the corrupt statesmen who, out of popular fanaticism, forged a political weapon for their own ends, and the wretched perjurors whose every word was a lie stands the company of martyrs of every age and condition. We see among them aged missionaries whose whole life has been a preparation for death, servants, men of the people, artisans, strong in their innocence and their faith, and men of gentle blood who mount the scaffold with the same knightly courage that they and their ancestors have shown in former times on many another battlefield.

These men were one and all filled with the same courage, patience and faith, and also, let us add, with the same attachment to that king who, convinced as he was of their innocence, left them to the mercy of their executioners. His name was one of the last they uttered, and with their dying breath they affirmed their loyalty together with their faith.

Already a large number of our martyrs are beatified by the Church. The cause of those whose history

is here related has not yet been judged at Rome. It will shortly be so: and then, let us hope, the English Catholics who now enjoy a peace and freedom so dearly purchased will be able to honour on their altars these valiant soldiers of Christ, among whom some of us may reckon one or more of our own ancestry, direct or collateral, and ponder with mingled pride and self-abasement on so grand a page in our family records as that illuminated by their blood.

In the general plan of our work we have followed Lingard,* whose history of England is a classic with Catholics, and whose conscientious accuracy is universally acknowledged.

We have at the same time controlled and corroborated his testimony by that of Protestant historians who cannot be suspected of any bias in favour of the Papists, such as Macaulay, Hume, Gardiner, Strickland, Green and others.

The history of the secular priests who were martyred is chiefly taken from Challoner's "Missionary priests." † Dr Challoner, vicar apostolic of the London district, wrote in the last century, at a time when the memory of those of whom he wrote was still fresh and vivid in the minds of Catholics.

The details relating to the personality, labours and judicial trials of the Jesuit fathers, and the relations

* *History of England*, by John Lingard, D.D., 6th edition. London: Dolman, 1855 [also Duffy and Sons, 1878].

† *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, by the Right Rev. Dr Challoner, V.A.L. Dublin 1874.

of Charles II with the Benedictine Father Huddleston, are drawn from the valuable collection of documents gathered together by the learned, indefatigable and singularly humble Brother Foley, S.J., and of which only a limited number of copies were published.* This collection comprises contemporary narratives, often previously unpublished, official reports preserved in the Record Office, letters intercepted by government or seized at the Jesuit colleges in the Low Countries, and very full genealogical and biographical details. One thick volume of the series is entirely taken up with matter relating to Titus Oates's plot.

Besides these principal sources of information, we have gleaned various particulars from works of minor importance, quoted in the course of this account, and also from old family papers which have furnished the finishing touches to the picture drawn, not from imagination in any single feature but from faithfully recorded facts of history.

B. DE C.

* *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, by Henry Foley, S.J. Vol. v, Series xii, London, Burns and Oates, 1879.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IN preparing an English edition of “*La Persécution des Catholiques en Angleterre sous Charles II*,” by the kind permission of Madame de Courson, I have been aware that it may be asked whether the publication of a book which contains so much that is already known to English readers may not be somewhat uncalled-for. All may not think so; there are many in these busy days who have but little leisure to search among the records of the past for themselves, and to whom, as well as to some who have, much will be new, for the substance of this little work has been gathered from many a quarry, not always accessible, such as family archives and letters of the period.

Also, as far as I am aware, this is at present the only consecutive narrative, in English, of the events recorded in relation to, and as they affected the public and private life of the Catholics in England during the reign of Charles II.

Since completing the translation, I have rejoiced to learn that the French original, together with “*Quatre Portraits de Femmes*,” by the same authoress, has been “crowned” by the Académie Française, which thus confers upon these two works a singular mark of distinction; no book written in French by

an Englishwoman having hitherto received this honour.

I have only to add that the few variations from and additions to the original, to be found in the translation, have been made with the authorization of Madame de Courson.

ELIZABETH RAYMOND-BARKER.

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The Condition of English Catholics under Charles II



CHAPTER I

FIRST YEARS OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES II

I

Peaceful restoration of Charles II to the throne of England in 1660—Part played by Monk—Declaration of Breda—Enthusiasm of the people.

HISTORY offers few examples of a monarchical restoration effected under such favourable circumstances as that of Charles II to the throne of England. This prince, in 1660, took possession of his royal heritage without having occasion to strike a blow or to invoke foreign intervention.

Recalled from exile at the spontaneous desire of his people, he ascended amid general rejoicing the throne which, only eleven years before, had been dyed with his father's blood. Charles I, the second king of the house of Stuart who had reigned over England, fell on the scaffold, January 30, 1649, atoning by his death and by the Christian dignity of his last moments for his many mistakes as a ruler, most of which were attributable to the exaggerated notions of kingly power

in which he had been brought up. Although unwise as a sovereign, this unfortunate prince, as a man, was adorned with every virtue. At the time of his execution his wife and children,* who were tenderly attached to him, were either prisoners or in exile; the Royalists, after a brave resistance, were vanquished and dispersed; and for the ancient monarchy was substituted the military despotism of Oliver Cromwell under the name of a republic. But the nation soon wearied of this arbitrary rule, and at the time of Cromwell's death in 1658 there was already a widespread desire for the return of the son of its ancient kings.

This desire speedily found expression, thanks in the first place to the unambitious character of Richard Cromwell, who, instead of availing himself of his inherited position as protector, hastened to renounce all claim as his father's successor; and in the second place, and more especially, to the ability of General Monk, † who had long been working with consummate prudence for the restoration of the monarchy. Tired of the despotism of the Lord Protector, England

* Charles I married Henrietta Maria of France, daughter of Henri IV and Maria de' Medici. Born in 1609, married 1625, she died in 1669 in France, where she lived from the time of her widowhood. Bossuet has immortalized the faith and resignation of "la reine malheureuse." Charles left six children: Charles, b. 1630, ascended the throne in 1660; James, b. 1633; Mary, who married the Prince of Orange; Elizabeth, who during the civil war died in prison at Carisbrooke Castle at the age of fifteen; Henry, who died soon after the restoration; and Henrietta Anne, who married Philippe, Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV.

† Monk, born 1608, served in Cromwell's army. On the resignation of Richard Cromwell he placed himself at the disposal of the exiled Charles II, and used his credit to bring about that prince's restoration. Created Duke of Albemarle, he continued to serve his country till his death in 1670.

had learnt to look back regretfully to the rule of her kings ; when, therefore, Monk openly proposed to Parliament to recall the son of Charles I, the project was unanimously agreed to and was welcomed with a frenzy of joy throughout the country.

With a political ability remarkable in a military man, Monk, having secured the concurrence of the prince in whose favour he was acting, was able to present to Parliament a declaration in which Charles undertook to grant liberty of conscience to all and a general amnesty to political offenders.

This conciliatory declaration produced a most favourable impression. A deputation was sent by Parliament inviting the king to come and take possession of his crown ; and on May 29, 1660, the young king landed at Dover. When a few days later he made his solemn entry into London, the enthusiasm was indescribable. "Never, perhaps," says Lingard,* "did any event in the history of this nation produce such general and exuberant joy as the return of Charles to take possession of the throne of his fathers."

Freed from the oppressive yoke of the Puritans, the people gave themselves up to effusive delight at the dawn of the restoration. The monarchical instinct, so deeply rooted in the national mind, displayed itself in a thousand different ways ; and this Anglo-Saxon race, usually so self-restrained, welcomed its youthful sovereign with demonstrations customary among the peoples of the south. Soldiers drank his health with one knee on the ground ; men, women and children ran to meet him and kissed his hands and even his

* *Hist. of England*, ix, 1. Dolman's ed. in ten vols, 1855.

feet; tears of emotion mingled with the shouts of joy; and the capital, which eleven years before had remained passive at the execution of Charles I, could not now sufficiently acclaim his heir.



II

The English Catholics hope for relief under the new King—Their sufferings under Cromwell—Charles II is favourable to them—Charles II, after the battle of Worcester, is saved by Catholics—His sojourn at Moseley—His words to Mr Huddleston.

AMONGST those who rejoiced most at the restoration of the monarchy were the Catholics. They, more than any throughout the realm, had suffered under the Lord Protector's iron yoke, and they had weighty reasons for expecting from the new king an improvement in their lot.

It cannot be said that the Catholics of England had hitherto had any cause for gratitude to the princes of the house of Stuart. James I, the son of a martyred mother, had cruelly persecuted them; Charles I, although by nature gentle and humane, had weakly permitted the execution of the penal laws against them; but, great as their sufferings already were, these had been much increased under the government of Cromwell.

On account of their attachment to the old faith he prosecuted them as enemies of the state religion, and also, on account of their fidelity to the monarchy, as enemies of the government. During the entire period of the Commonwealth priests and laymen had been treated with the utmost severity; and, cruel as the monarchy had been to them under the Stuarts, it

was at all events less cruel than the sanguinary fanaticism of Cromwell and his Roundheads.

Charles II, whose mother was a French princess, Henrietta Maria de Bourbon, had been educated in the Anglican religion, but had spent the greater part of his youth in exile, away from the Protestant atmosphere of his country. He was said to be favourably disposed to the religion of his mother, and it was even rumoured that, during his long sojourns at Paris, the venerable Abbé Olier had convinced him of the truth of Catholicism.

His Catholic subjects moreover felt a legitimate pride in the fact that all through the civil war they had proved themselves the most devoted lieges of the king, and that around the standard of Charles I were grouped representatives of the ancient Catholic families of Dormer, Arundel, Howard, Talbot and many more; so much so that one of the accusations made against the king by the Puritans was that he marched at the head of an army of Papists.* Again, by the Declaration of Breda, to which he had given his adhesion before mounting the throne, Charles II promised to all his subjects without distinction full and entire liberty of conscience, provided that they did nothing to disturb the tranquillity of the state.

Trusting to this royal promise, the good faith of which they had as yet no reason to doubt, the faithful looked forward, after their long and bitter trials, to a period of justice and calm. Everything seemed to encourage this expectation—the formal engagement entered into by the new sovereign, the con-

* Of 500 gentlemen who died fighting for Charles I 200 were Catholics.—Ward, *Life and Times of Card. Wiseman*, i, 180.

sideration of the sacrifices they had made and the perils they had endured in his cause, added to the fact that in a most critical moment of his career Charles II had owed the preservation of his life to Catholics, and in particular to a country gentleman and his chaplain, John Huddleston, a priest who afterwards became a Benedictine monk.

This episode belongs to the period when the young king, at the age of twenty-one, attempted to take possession of the throne by force of arms.

Defeated at the battle of Worcester in August, 1651, a price was set upon his head; but he who was now a mere fugitive in the kingdom of his forefathers found as he fled fresh proofs of the traditional loyalty and devotion of his Catholic subjects.

After the disastrous battle in which the flower of his army fell, Charles was concealed in the forest depths of Boscobel by the brothers Penderell, simple woodcutters and woodwards of that secluded spot. By one of the brothers, known as "Trusty Richard," he was safely conducted to his next place of concealment. But the way was long and the prince's feet were bleeding from his weary tramp through almost pathless woods; his guide contrived therefore to provide him with a horse from a neighbouring mill. When the king remarked on its slow and heavy pace, "Sire," said Penderell, "you forget that he carries the weight of three kingdoms on his back."

From the faithful woodwards of Boscobel the king passed into the hands of Thomas Whitgreave of Mosely Hall.* He and his chaplain, Father

* The descendants of Thomas Whitgreave, who have ever been true to the faith of their ancestors, are still the owners of Mosely.

Huddleston, have left a detailed narrative of the event. They tell us how the king, disguised in coarse garments and drenched with rain, sat before the blazing hearth while the priest, kneeling at his side, bathed and bandaged his swollen and wounded feet, the good squire and his nephews meanwhile posting themselves at every outlet of the mansion, ready to defend it in case of need. Next day, continues the narrative, Charles conversed for a long time with Father Huddleston, asking many questions, amongst others how the Catholics were treated by the republican government. The priest answered that, as Catholics first and then as Royalists, they had a double share of persecution, and showed him the little chapel where the sacred mysteries were celebrated in secret. Suddenly an alarm was given that a troop of Cromwell's horse was approaching the house, and the king was promptly shut up in the hiding-place prepared for proscribed priests, who in times of persecution found generous hospitality at Mosely. When after some hours the troopers, disappointed in their search, had departed, Charles came out of his narrow cell. "Your Majesty," said Father Huddleston, smiling, "has been treated in the same way as myself, and exposed to the same dangers." To this the king quickly answered: "If it shall please God to restore to me my crown, you and those of your religion shall enjoy the same liberty as my other subjects." Words prompted by a young and grateful heart, but melancholy to recall in connexion with the san-

John Huddleston belonged to an old Catholic family of Staffordshire. He will appear again, later in our narrative, by the deathbed of the king.

guinary executions chronicled in Charles' subsequent history.

In the following night Mr Whitgreave conducted his guest to the place where horses and a trusty guide awaited him. The September air was chill, and Father Huddleston, noticing that he shivered, threw his own cloak over the king, who thankfully accepted it. Thus it was in the mantle of a priest that the royal fugitive and outlaw quitted the hospitable roof of Moseley Hall.



III

Character of Charles II—His natural gifts, his vices and supineness—

Attempts to improve the condition of Catholics—Is opposed by Hyde—His first concession to Protestant requirements.

BEFORE entering on the drama which forms the subject of our narrative, we will briefly trace the portrait, at the time of his coming to the throne, of a prince who amid the vicissitudes of his early life had shown himself so chivalrous and high-minded; of a son who, in his generous attempt to save his father's life, had sent his signature on a blank sheet of paper to be filled up by Cromwell with any terms it might please the military dictator to impose.* Like all his race, with the exception perhaps of his grandfather, James I, he had the gift of inspiring the most ardent and disinterested, not to say blind, devotion.

Although not inheriting the noble and melancholy beauty of his father, with which the portraits by Van Dyck have rendered us familiar, Charles II at the age of twenty was not without a certain charm. His

* Strickland, iv, 365.

cousin, Mademoiselle de Montpensier,* who at one time regarded him as a possible consort, describes him as very dark, with a fine head, black hair and passably agreeable in person.† He was lively, intelligent, fluent in speech, amiable in disposition; and, in the disastrous campaign of 1651, had displayed an energy and courage worthy of the grandson of Henri IV. Unfortunately these natural gifts were alloyed by indolence, self-indulgence and a habit of procrastination.

On his accession he formed, as he believed, a strong resolution to devote his chief attention to the business of the government and to allow no allurements to seduce him from the duties of his high office. But he soon began to chafe under the restraint, and finding himself perplexed with the multitude and complexity of affairs demanding his consideration, he gradually ceased to trouble himself about them, and neglected everything but amusement and dissipation, falling an easy prey to the wiles of his mistresses and the designs of worthless courtiers and unscrupulous ministers. There are few sadder spectacles in history than this reign, which, after so bright a dawn, became so clouded with shame and so dyed with blood.

But so general at first was the popularity of the king that even the Parliament seemed desirous of

* Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans, born 1627, daughter of Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII, and his first wife Marie de Bourbon. Montpensier, after the failure of successive matrimonial negotiations with various royal personages, ended by secretly marrying the Duc de Lauzun, thereby incurring the displeasure of the king, Louis XIV. She died in 1693.

† *Mémoires de Mdlle de Montpensier*, ed. 1858, annotated by Chéruel, i, 126.

anticipating all his wishes. Still, from the force of circumstances, difficulties gradually arose, and party animosities, sunk for the moment in the tide of universal rejoicing, revived with new strength and bitterness.

Thus the pardon granted by the king to the partisans of the late protectorate was felt as an injustice by many of his most devoted adherents—men who, having freely lost all their possessions in his cause, saw their sacrifices ignored or forgotten, while their adversaries who had ruined them were left in tranquil possession of their ill-gotten wealth.* It is just to add that the more notable regicides who had taken a direct part in the murder of the late king were not allowed to profit by the amnesty.

Efficiently seconded by his prime minister, Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Charles began by the re-establishment of the Anglican hierarchy set aside by the Commonwealth, and wished, in the next place, to take measures for the relief of his Catholic subjects, still crushed by the penal laws.

He may have remembered the anxious hours which had followed his defeat at Worcester, the wretched hiding-hole in which he had learnt by his own experience something of the sufferings of the proscribed priests, and the promise he had voluntarily made to the chaplain at Moseley. But his good intentions met with strenuous opposition from Clarendon, who, devoted Royalist as he was, was a still more zealous Protestant. He desired that the Jesuits should be allowed no benefit from any ameliorations that might be proposed by the king. Charles yielded

* Lingard, ix, 6.

in this matter to his minister, and in so doing took the first step in the long series of concessions which led him to such depths of base injustice. The result of it was that the Catholics, already disappointed that the penal laws should be modified merely, and not abrogated, now became divided among themselves in regard to Clarendon's proposition. By this division, which paralyzed their strength, their enemies adroitly profited, and obtained, at any rate for the moment, the abandonment of all measures for their relief.



IV

The king's marriage—Catherine of Braganza—Her parents—Her claustral education—She leaves Portugal—Her arrival in England—Marriage—She is promptly neglected by the King—Her attitude.

TWO years after his return to England, i.e., in 1662, Charles married Catherine, the Infanta of Portugal. She was the daughter of John IV, the first sovereign of the house of Braganza, and Luisa de Guzman, a beautiful and intelligent princess, who played an important part in the history of her country.

When, on St Catherine's day, November 25, 1638, Catherine of Braganza was born, Portugal had for six years been subject to Spain. After the death of King Sebastian* at the fatal battle of Alcazarquivir in 1578, Philip II had taken advantage of the troubles of Portugal to possess himself of that country; but the feeble rule of the later Spanish sovereigns, Philip III and Philip IV, aroused in the Portuguese patriots who felt the humiliation of being subject to a foreign

* Son of John, Prince of the Brazils, and Juana, daughter of Charles V,

yoke a resolution to recover their national independence. They built their hopes upon John, Duke of Braganza, a descendant of their ancient kings; and, on the day that the Infanta Catherine attained her second year, proposed that he should march at their head to free his country from the domination of Spain.

The duke hesitated. His life was tranquil and happy, and he shrank from facing the risks of so perilous an enterprise. In this critical moment it was Luisa de Guzman who influenced her husband's decision. Taking the little Catherine in her arms, she said, as she presented the child to her father, "Have you the heart to refuse to your child the rank of a king's daughter?"

John of Braganza yielded. At the head of his loyal Portuguese he threw himself into the dangers of a struggle against the formidable power of Spain; and, being proclaimed king with the title of John IV, succeeded after four years of heroic efforts in liberating his country and establishing himself firmly on the throne. He died in the prime of life in 1656, leaving the regency in the hands of his wife, whose superior capabilities and determination of character had largely contributed to her husband's success.

Luisa de Guzman governed Portugal for ten years in the name of her son Alphonso. Desiring to strengthen by powerful alliances the throne she had helped to found, she had, in the marriage of her daughter, a natural opportunity for securing the support of a friendly nation to the newly-established dynasty of Braganza.

Already, in 1644, John IV had entered into negotiations with Charles I of England, having for their

object the marriage of the Infanta Catherine, who was seven years old, with the Prince of Wales, who was then fourteen. But meanwhile the civil war, the execution of King Charles and the exile of his son had interrupted the project which, sixteen years afterwards, was renewed by Luisa de Guzman.

This time the negotiations were promptly brought to a successful issue, thanks chiefly to the influence of the two dowager queens. Henrietta Maria of France, widow of Charles I, ardently desired that her son should marry a Catholic, and the queen-regent of Portugal as eagerly wished to see her daughter on the throne of a friendly nation. Moreover, England had been the first among the powers of Europe to acknowledge the royalty of the house of Braganza.

On June 23, 1661, Charles II signed a treaty of alliance with Portugal, by which it was stipulated that the infanta should have for her dowry the city of Bombay. The same treaty guaranteed to her the free exercise of her religion and authorized her to have a chapel and chaplains in each of her palaces.

These important preliminaries being settled, the Earl of Sandwich set out for Portugal to escort to England the future queen.

Thomas Maynard, writing from Lisbon, had given Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State to Charles II, numerous details as to the person and education of the infanta. He described her as very gentle in disposition, and accustomed to so secluded an existence that she had scarcely been ten times outside of the royal palace in all her life, and that during five years she had not once crossed its threshold. When her

marriage was announced she was allowed a little more liberty, and availed herself of it to visit two churches in the city, and even, adds Maynard, to make a few pilgrimages to sanctuaries in the neighbourhood.

It would have been difficult to find any couple more unlike each other than these two, who, for political reasons, were to be united as man and wife, nor a more portentous abyss than that between the thoughtless libertine, Charles II, and this young princess, snatched from her cloistered existence to be thrown into the midst of the most corrupt court in Europe.

On April 23, 1662, the new queen quitted her mother, whom she was never to see again, and set sail for the unknown realm of which the crown was destined to press so heavily upon her brow. She arrived at Portsmouth May 13, and there, five days later, Charles II came to meet her. As the king did not understand Portuguese, and as the infanta had not yet learnt English, the betrothed pair conversed in Spanish. Their marriage was solemnized according to the Catholic rite early in the morning of May 21 in the private rooms of the infanta with the utmost secrecy. The official marriage took place publicly a few hours later in the day.

The king, who was eventually to embitter with so many sorrows the life of his young wife, appeared at first to be charmed by her sweetness and simplicity.*

* Lord Chesterfield, who was appointed to be the queen's chamberlain, wrote of her as follows: "You may credit her being a very extraordinary woman; that is, extremely devout, extremely discreet, very fond of her husband and the owner of a good understanding. As to her person, she is exactly shaped and has lovely hands, excel-

Four days after his marriage the king wrote to Clarendon: "I cannot easily tell you how happy I think myself, and I must be the worst man living, which I hope I am not, if I be not a good husband."*

Like so many other words written or spoken by Charles II, these were to be cruelly belied by his deeds. Nor was it long before Catherine of Braganza found her hopes of conjugal happiness rudely dispelled. The king promptly fell again under the ignoble yoke of his mistresses and other unprincipled favourites, and, doubly isolated as a Catholic and a foreigner, this unfortunate lady, both as a neglected wife and a childless queen, found her royal diadem to be truly a crown of thorns. She suffered the more keenly because she had become fondly attached to the husband who had at first shown himself so full of thoughtful kindness to her, and whose affection, fleeting as it was, had entirely won her heart. Too proud and too sincere to resign herself without remonstrance to the king's neglect or to his cruel insistence that she should make one of the most infamous women about the court one of her ladies of the bedchamber, the young queen, in the first flush of her indignation and distress, expressed her feelings with perhaps more energy than prudence; but, from the hard requirements of her lot, she quickly learnt its bitter lesson, passively submitted to the pains and perils of her destiny, and, saddened

lent eyes, a good countenance, a pleasing voice, fine hair and, in a word, is what an understanding man would wish a wife."—Letters of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield, quoted by Strickland, *Queens of England*, iv, 381, edition 1865.

* Strickland's *Queens of England*, iv, 381.

and subdued, passed unsullied through the iniquities of this disgraceful reign.

Not that she had any natural tendency to melancholy, for soon after her first arrival in England the infanta, whose childhood had been so austere, and whose married life was to be so full of trials, had occasional impulses of youthful gaiety, and, as a true daughter of the south, took great delight in dancing. "The greatest fault of Catherine of Braganza," observes Sir Walter Scott,* "was her being educated a Catholic; her greatest misfortune bearing the king no children; and her greatest foible an excessive love of dancing." "And yet," writes another Protestant historian,† "there was an atmosphere of holiness about her, a purity and innocence in her conversation, and an integrity in her conduct, which showed that all she did was from motives of conscience and as matters of duty." The trials and dangers of which her life was full developed in her unexpected capabilities and force of character; and thirty years later it would have been difficult to recognize, in the able and victorious regent of Portugal, the much-injured wife of Charles II. In the drama we are about to unfold, the sorrowful figure of Catherine of Braganza appears prominently before us. The martyrs sent to their deaths were her friends and servants, and it was the aim of her enemies to cause her to be involved in their condemnation.

* In his notes to Dryden, quoted by Miss Strickland, *Queens of England*, iv, 435.

† Strickland, iv, 434.

V

Success of the English fleet in the war with Holland—Plague of London—Fire—Public discontent—Murmurs at the luxury of the court—Fall of Clarendon—Shaftesbury made prime minister—His character—Secret treaty with France—The Duchess of Orleans—Her correspondence with Charles II—Her political action—Her death—The clause in the treaty relating to the king's conversion remains a dead letter.

Two years after his marriage Charles declared war against the Dutch, whose commercial interests clashed with those of England. He was at first successful, his brother James, Duke of York and High Admiral of England, gaining a brilliant victory over the enemy off Lowestoft. The news of this victory would have caused general rejoicing had it not reached London when the city was being devastated by the plague, which, in a few months, carried off 100,000 of the population. The Catholic priests distinguished themselves by their devoted attendance upon the sufferers, the French Capuchins, belonging to the chapel of the queen-mother, rivalling the English missionary priests in self-devotion on this new battle-field, where several of their number laid down their lives.*

Scarcely had the plague begun to subside when a terrible fire broke out in the city on September 2, 1666, and in the space of four days destroyed 400 streets, 13,200 houses and 89 churches, including the ancient cathedral of St Paul. Before it was extinguished 200,000 persons found themselves without

* *Records of the English Province*, v, 558.

shelter or resource. Charles II, in presence of his people's calamity, recovered all the energy and courage which had made him so popular in the days of his youth. Together with his brother, the Duke of York, he was seen wherever the danger was greatest and the need of aid most urgent, himself directing, helping and encouraging the firemen and assistants, and giving large relief to many who had lost their all.

By these successive calamities a gloom was cast over the public mind ; and when Parliament met again after the disaster it was evident that the king, in spite of his personal exertions, had lost some measure of his popularity.

Public opinion, hitherto so indulgent, now showed a disposition to comment unfavourably on certain excesses to which, in its first enthusiasm for the restored monarchy, it had shown itself blind.

Tired of the stern rigorism of the Puritans, the nation had at first taken no umbrage at the proceedings of the Royalists, who by their splendour, careless freedom and gaiety protested against the morose austerity of their adversaries. Now, however, it was discovered that this brilliant court was also costly, that the public funds were often lavished on mere favourites and mistresses, whose cupidity was flagrant and insatiable ; and this dissatisfaction deepened when the war with Holland, in spite of its earlier success, ended in reverses and defeat.

As often happens in similar circumstances, the popular discontent, after seething as it were beneath the surface, suddenly burst forth on the head of one man, who, without being more to blame than others for the public misfortunes, was held responsible for

them by the nation. The king's prime minister, Clarendon, was in this instance made the scapegoat. He was disgraced, and went to die in exile.

His fall was succeeded by a ministry whose most active, dangerous and corrupt member was Ashley, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury: a man without faith or principle, who gloried in his atheism and in whom avarice and ambition had effaced every vestige of morality or honour.*

In the persecution of the Catholics the leading part was taken by Shaftesbury, who, in order to prop up his threatened popularity, first aroused the terrors of the populace by the phantom of a pretended popish plot, and then utilized for his own purposes the wild alarm which he himself had created. He knew that there existed in the heart of the nation, led astray as it was by lying reports, a mass of hatred and mistrust in regard to these mysterious "Papists," and that in appealing to its prejudices he would be certain to obtain a hearing.

In 1670 Charles II made a secret treaty with Louis XIV, by which he undertook to support in case of need the claims of the king of France to the throne of Spain, to join him against Holland, and, lastly, to embrace the Catholic religion as soon as he should find it practicable to do so; while Louis, on his part, promised to pay his cousin, whose financial difficulties were notorious, an annual pension of 3,000,000 livres. This treaty, which made the King of England the pensioner of France, was negotiated between the

* This ministry was called the "Cabal," because the initials of the names of its members formed the word, i.e., Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley and Lauderdale.

two sovereigns by the young Duchess of Orleans, Henrietta Anne of England,* whose easy grace and apparently somewhat frivolous elegance concealed a keen intelligence and a singular aptitude for business.

Charles II had always shown a special predilection for his younger sister. He frequently wrote to her, and their correspondence, which was published a few years ago, throws an unexpected light on the state of the king's mind in regard to religious matters. Of all her children the Duchess of Orleans was the only one whom Queen Henrietta Maria had been able to bring up in the faith of her fathers, and religious questions occupy a large place in the correspondence between the brother and sister. In it Charles shows himself under various aspects : at first, as a zealous Protestant, he is indignant at the efforts which were fruitlessly made by the queen-mother to convert her third son, the Duke of Gloucester.† Then his mood changes ; he asks his sister for a scapular,‡ and promises to wear it ; discusses with her the question

* Henrietta Anne Stuart, born in 1644, in the midst of the civil war, married in 1661 her cousin, Philip of France, Duke of Orleans, younger brother of Louis XIV. She died at St Cloud in 1670, leaving two daughters, Marie Louise, who married Carlos II, King of Spain, and died without issue at the age of twenty-seven, and Anne Marie, married to Victor Amadeus II, Duke of Savoy and King of Sardinia. It is through the descendants of this princess that the royal and princely families of Naples, Modena, Parma and Austria are connected with the house of Stuart.

† Henry Stuart, Duke of Gloucester, third son of Charles I, was still a child when he received his father's last blessing and farewell on the eve of his execution. Henry died in 1660.

‡ MADAME : *Life of Henrietta, daughter of Charles I, and Duchess of Orleans.* By Julia Cartwright. London : Seeley and Son. 1894.

of his abjuration, and even lays before her his plans for disarming the fanaticism of his subjects. Had he a sincere conviction that the old faith, held by his ancestors, was alone the true one? Had the conversation of M. Olier enlightened his fickle and wavering spirit? Or was he merely seeking to gratify a beloved sister and, through her, a useful and powerful ally?

During the splendid festivities given in her honour at Dover, the young duchess brought to a successful issue the secret treaty, the negotiation of which had been entrusted to her by the two kings. Only three weeks later the palace of St Cloud resounded with the cry which Bossuet has immortalized : “ MADAME is dying ! MADAME is dead ! ”

This princess, whose wit and personal charm had made her so popular in the two countries, died suddenly at the age of twenty-six, under mysterious circumstances which still add to the horror of the catastrophe.

Henceforth there was one beneficent influence the less on the life of Charles II. Had she lived, who can say what might not have been effected for her brethren in the faith by this young, intelligent and energetic woman, the confidante of two sovereigns, and one who held an unquestioned sway over the unstable character of her brother? The clause in the treaty relating to the conversion of Charles remained a dead letter. From time to time Louis XIV would remind him of his promise, but was always met by some pretext for eluding its fulfilment. Thus, when once he felt himself secure of the support of England, the King of France ceased to importune his ally on the subject;

and Lingard is probably right in his conjecture that neither of the two sovereigns was really in earnest in this matter.* In any case they showed far more interest in the other clauses of the treaty : the alliance they had entered into against Holland was successful, especially at first ; and while Turenne was invading the low countries, three of whose provinces he conquered, the Duke of York in 1672 by a brilliant naval victory compelled the famous Admiral de Ruyter to withdraw his ships.



VI

Disappointment of the English Catholics—The king tolerates new measures against them—Declaration of indulgence—This declaration withdrawn by Parliament—The Test Act—Its formulary and its effects—Chiefly aimed at the Duke of York.

WE have seen the hopes that were raised in the hearts of the English Catholics by the restoration of Charles II. These hopes, founded on the royal promise embodied in the Declaration of Breda, on the known attraction of the king to the religion of his ancestors and on the memory of the important services rendered by his Catholic subjects in the time of his misfortunes and distress, were doomed to bitter disappointment. Charles II had not courage to protect from the fanaticism of his ministers the men whose loyalty he acknowledged—a loyalty which had cost them and their families many a broad acre, many a stately home and many a precious life.

One disappointment was quickly followed by another, stroke after stroke. In February, 1663, the

* Lingard's *History of England*, ix, 86.

king permitted a new decree to be published against the priests. After openly avowing that it would be unjust to refuse to those who had deserved well—his Catholic subjects—some share in the boon of indulgence granted to those who had not—the Protestant dissenters—and that the laws against Catholics were so rigorous and sanguinary that to execute them would be to do violence to his nature, he yielded before the intolerant outcry of the Protestant party. This party was zealously supported by the bishops, whom Charles hesitated not to charge with ingratitude and bigotry, reminding them that their intolerance under his father had cost them the prelacy, that they owed their own restoration to power to his promise from Breda, and now used that power to prevent him from fulfilling his promise to others. But a deeper mortification awaited him. He asked at least the permission of Parliament to shelter from the extreme severity of the penal statutes those Catholics who had served the royal cause; and in answer both Houses demanded a proclamation to be made, ordering all Catholic priests to quit the kingdom under penalty of death. After a feeble resistance the king acquiesced. The champions of orthodoxy next introduced a Bill for checking the growth of popery, coupled with another to arrest that of nonconformity, at the same time urging the king, in spite of the protests of the Catholic and Presbyterian peers, to execute all the penal laws against Catholics and dissenters of every description.*

By the Conventicle Act,† to which in the next

* Lingard, ix, 41, 42.

† Ibid., 47.

session Charles gave a reluctant assent, all meetings of more than five persons besides those of the family, for any religious purpose not according to the Book of Common Prayer, were declared unlawful and seditious ; and any person above sixteen years of age attending them must for the first offence pay £5 or have three months' imprisonment ; for the second, double those penalties ; for the third, £100 or transportation for seven years, after which the fine at each repetition of the offence should be augmented by an additional sum of £100. This intolerant Act was immediately enforced ; and seldom has there been a more flagrant violation of a solemn engagement, or a more cruel and widespread flood of informations, prosecutions, fines, imprisonments and ruin for conscience' sake than that which it let loose.

In 1666 a committee was appointed "to inquire into the insolence of Papists and the increase of Popery," in consequence of which a fresh proclamation was issued commanding all priests and Jesuits to quit the country and all magistrates to execute the laws against recusants, directing that all Papists were to be disarmed, that the oaths of allegiance and supremacy were to be administered to all persons suspected of Popery, and that the commanders of regiments must dismiss from the army every soldier and officer who should refuse to take the oaths or to receive the sacrament in the Established Church. These measures were the outcome of a fresh calumny, the enemies of the Catholics in their reckless hatred accusing them of having caused the fire of London by purposely setting the city alight in various places. No shadow of proof was even attempted in support of

this monstrous accusation, treated by all reasonable persons with disdain; and yet in deference to the popular outcry a column was erected bearing an inscription which perpetuated the falsehood for two hundred years.*

This fact of itself suffices to show the blind fanaticism of the mob. All measures against the Catholics were applauded, and the feeble attempts made by the king to ameliorate their lot were met by a determined opposition which needed a man of very different mould from that of Charles to overcome. There was, however, one brief interval in which the Catholics once more ventured to hope that better days might be in store for them. The Cabal ministry had failed to conciliate the Presbyterians and Puritans, who in the war with Holland had manifested a sympathy with the enemy which had alarmed the government, and not without reason.† In order to gain them over a Declaration of Indulgence was issued, by which certain immunities were granted to all dissidents from the Establishment, even to the Papists. This decree aroused a storm of indignation. The Parliament of 1673 not only insisted on its withdrawal but revenged this attempt at conciliation by passing the Test Act,‡ which ruled that “every

* “The burning of this Protestant city was begun and carried on by the treachery and malice of the popish faction in order to the effecting of their horrid plot for the extirpating the Protestant religion and English liberties, and to introduce Popery and heresy.”

This inscription was written by Dr Gale, afterwards Dean of York. It was erased, together with its Latin counterpart, from the column December 6, 1830.

† Lingard, ix, 103.

‡ Ibid., 113.

individual refusing to take the oath of allegiance and supremacy and to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England should be incapable of public employment, military or civil"; and a Bill was introduced requiring not only that the oaths should be taken and the sacrament received, but also that a declaration against the doctrine of Transubstantiation should be subscribed by all persons holding office, under penalty of a fine of £500 and of being disabled to sue in any court of law or equity, to be guardian to any child or executor to any person, or to take any legacy or deed of gift, or to bear any public office.

This iniquitous Bill passed both Houses without a division. It seemed as if the members of the Cabal, against whom the country had heavy causes of complaint, sacrificed the Catholics to the jealousy of their opponents on condition of indemnity to themselves.* Charles II, although opposed to this measure, gave way as usual to the imperious requirements of his Parliament, his weakness in this instance being all the more culpable because the Test Act was especially aimed at his brother, the Duke of York and heir to the throne.

* "It was the constant practice of these ministers that when any of them were afraid of the House of Commons for themselves, they presently exposed the Papists to be worried, hoping thereby to save themselves from being fastened upon."—James, i, 499. Quoted by Lingard.

VII

First marriage of the Duke of York—His wife's conversion, followed by his own—Obliged by the Test Act to declare his change of religion—Loss of popularity—Refuses to marry a Protestant—Marries Mary Beatrice of Modena.

BORN in 1633, James, the second son of Charles I, was almost from his birth created Lord High Admiral of England, a title which he amply justified later in life by his distinguished ability as commander of the English fleet in the war with Holland. About the year 1660 he secretly married Anne Hyde, daughter of the Lord Chancellor, Clarendon, and maid-of-honour to Mary Stuart, Princess of Orange,* knowing that this alliance would offend his family, although his wife was equal in rank to several queen-consorts of the Plantagenet and Tudor kings.† On the birth of his first child it became necessary to announce his marriage, and, as he expected, the king, the queen-mother and the Princess of Orange received the announcement with great displeasure, the princess openly expressing her annoyance at seeing one of her ladies-in-waiting become her sister-in-law.

* Mary Stuart, born in 1630, eldest daughter of Charles I, married in 1641 to William II, Stadholder of the Low Countries, was at the age of 21 left a widow with an only son, William, who married his cousin-german, Mary, daughter of the Duke of York, afterwards James II. William drove his father-in-law from the throne in 1688, and, with his wife, took possession of it to the exclusion of the son of James II.

† Elizabeth Woodville, married to Edward IV; Anne Neville to the Prince of Wales, the son of Henry VI, and then to Richard III; Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Catherine Howard and Catherine Parr, four of the six wives of Henry VIII.

Gradually all parties became reconciled to the connexion, and at the close of 1660 the Duchess of York was received at court. She was by no means beautiful, but distinguished and dignified in appearance and irreproachable in her private life. She had eight children, of whom two daughters, Mary and Anne, both destined to wear the crown, survived her. She fell into a feeble state of health while comparatively young. As her strength declined, she showed an increased attachment to the religious practices she had always loved, prayed much, publicly received the sacrament according to the Anglican rite, and conferred frequently with the ministers of that communion. Then, all at once, she ceased to partake of the Anglican sacrament, and it was noticed that she spoke with affection of the proscribed and persecuted Catholic Church. Those around her became alarmed; her father, Lord Clarendon, and her brother used all their influence to confirm her in the religious belief in which she had been brought up. It was too late. Convinced that the old faith was the true one, she clung to it the more tenaciously because she knew that her days were numbered. She made her abjuration in 1671, the Franciscan, Father Francis Hunt,* receiving her into the Church. Another Franciscan, Father Nicholas Cross, was her chaplain during the short time she had to live. When she was on her deathbed, the Anglican Bishop of Oxford went to visit her, but the Duke of York himself undertook to

* Father Hunt, called in religion Francis de Santa Clara, is the author of a history of the English province of the Friars Minors, and of several controversial works. He died in 1680, after an apostolate of fifty-seven years.

inform the prelate of her change of religion. Fortified by the last rites of the Catholic Church and assisted and consoled by the queen, now become doubly her sister, the Duchess of York died at the age of thirty-four, on May 31, 1671. Endeavours were made to conceal the conversion of the king's sister-in-law, but the news got abroad, with the addition that the Duke of York shared his wife's convictions. And, in this, rumour was correct. The duke had made his abjuration in 1669, to Father Emmanuel Lobb, S.J.,* but in order not to irritate the king and so still further compromise his brethren in the faith, he dissembled his change of religion until the Test Act obliged him to declare it openly. This declaration was precisely what his enemies were seeking to obtain.

Whatever may have been the faults and failings of his private life or, later, his political mistakes as a sovereign, James, Duke of York, gave proofs of absolute and unflinching loyalty to his religious convictions. When it became necessary to acknowledge these convictions under the alternative of apostasy, he refused his adhesion to the blasphemous formula of the Test Act, and, as an immediate consequence, resigned the important posts which he had held with such marked ability and success. A large number of Catholic gentlemen invested with official functions followed his example.

* Father Emmanuel Lobb, *alias* Simeon, entered the Society of Jesus in 1619, and died in 1671. He was successively professor at the colleges of Liége and St Omers, rector of the English College at Rome and provincial of the English Jesuits. It was when occupying the last-named post that the Duke of York applied to him to be instructed in the Catholic religion.

Henceforth the popularity of the Duke of York was at an end. He who had been the nation's idol, beloved for his open and generous disposition, his passion for the navy, his victories over the Dutch and his courageous exertions in the fire of London—he, the admired and acclaimed high admiral of England, was now, as a Catholic, nothing to his countrymen but an object of suspicion and dislike. There still remained one means by which he could disarm their resentment, namely, by marrying a Protestant princess.

Being heir-presumptive to the throne, as Catherine of Braganza, his brother's wife, was childless, the nation was so much the more interested in the question of his marriage because the rights of his two daughters, the only surviving children of Anne Hyde, would disappear before the claims of a male heir to the crown.

But James, deaf to all interested solicitations, brought his unpopularity to a climax by marrying an Italian princess, Mary Beatrice d'Este, daughter of the Duke of Modena, a girl of fifteen, whose nobility, sweetness and beauty were powerless to disarm the anger and resentment of her husband's enemies.

In spite of all Shaftesbury's manœuvres to prevent the arrival of the princess in England, she disembarked at Dover on November 21, 1673, exchanging the blue skies of her native land for the wintry fogs of her adopted country, and the peaceful life of an Italian cloister for an existence full of difficulty, trial and sorrow.

VIII

Shaftesbury's two projects for the exclusion of the Duke of York—
Both rejected by the king—Shaftesbury tries other means—Fresh
laws promulgated against the Catholics—Shaftesbury aims at
their extermination by accusing them of conspiracy.

FOILED in his schemes for hindering the Duke of York's marriage with a Catholic princess, Shaftesbury next endeavoured to bar his succession to the throne. To this end two projects presented themselves as feasible: to change the order of succession by substituting for the Duke of York the Duke of Monmouth,* a natural son of Charles II, or else to induce Charles to divorce Queen Catherine of Braganza and marry a Protestant.

At first the king, with his habitual indolent indifference, allowed him to elaborate his projects; but afterwards there awoke within him some remains of pity for his unfortunate queen and of tenderness towards the brother who was his most faithful and devoted servant. With unwonted energy he repelled the propositions of Shaftesbury, who, baffled but not discouraged in his evil designs, had recourse to indirect and underhand means for their attainment.

He caused the promulgation of new laws, tyrannical and vexatious, against the Catholics; †

* James, Duke of Monmouth, son of Charles II and Lucy Walters, born 1649, died on the scaffold 1685, having disputed the crown with James II.

† As the result of a council, including several of the bishops, which met at Lambeth in 1674, a proclamation was issued that "all natives who had taken orders in the Church of Rome should quit the realm in

instructed his agents to invent and propagate the most extravagant calumnies against the priests, who were represented as forcing themselves into the houses of Protestants and compelling them to abjure by threatening them with death in case of refusal. These absurdities, gravely brought before the House of Commons by Lord William Russell, provoked a still more rigorous application of the penal laws than before. As for the king, he had again fallen under the yoke of his minister, and let him do as he pleased.

But this was not all. In order the more effectually to crush the Catholics, whom he hated as intensely as Cecil and Walsingham had hated them under Elizabeth, Shaftesbury required a still more powerful weapon. The fanatical effervescence produced by false rumours sedulously spread abroad and the application of the already existing penal laws were insufficient for his evil purpose. He now aimed at involving the queen, the Duke of York, the priests, religious and chief Catholic gentry in a pretended plot against the life of the king. This vast conspiracy, judiciously manipulated, would not fail to

the space of six weeks under the penalty of death ; that every subject of the three kingdoms who presumed to attend at Mass, either in the queen's chapel or in any chapel belonging to the foreign ambassadors, should for that offence suffer a year's imprisonment and pay a fine of 100 marks, of which a third part should be given as a reward to the informer ; that all convictions of popish recusants should be brought to a conclusion without delay that any Papist who should dare to enter the palaces of Whitehall or St James's or any place where the court might be, should, if a peer, be committed to the tower ; if under the rank of peer to one of the common gaols." See Lingard, ix, 129. Catholics were also forbidden to walk in St James's Park near the palace under pain of imprisonment.

add abundant fuel, as he well knew, to the flame of the national bigotry, besides increasing his own popularity and, above all, determining the definitive exclusion of the Duke of York from the succession to the throne. As the Protestant historian, Hume, justly observes, the time was well chosen for creating a panic in which the reason, good sense and humanity of the nation would be thrown to the winds.* Depressed and irritated by their recent calamities, the people were in a mood to be easily fired to madness by the phantom of fresh dangers.



IX

Irreproachable attitude of the Catholic party—Its representatives in the country and at Court—The opposing party, its head and its members—The king hovers between the two.

NEVER, perhaps, in spite of severe and repeated disappointments, were the Catholics, as a body, more careful to do nothing to lay themselves open to censure than at the period when this atrocious plot was being prepared to ensnare them.

In the provinces they were represented by country gentlemen, who secretly practised the proscribed religion in the seclusion of their hereditary manors, and by a number of smaller proprietors, farmers and peasants, grouped around the missionary priests whose ministrations kept alive in the land the light of the ancient faith. At court this same faith was represented by Queen Catherine of Braganza, admirable in the firmness of her principles and the purity of her life amid the sorrows, humiliations and perils of her destiny, her youthful sister-in-law, Mary Beatrice of

* Hume, *Hist. of England*, Charles II, vii.

Modena, whose sweetness and innocence availed not to shield her from hostility on account of her religion, and, lastly, the Duke of York, no longer the people's idol but suspected and persecuted because he was as faithful to his convictions as he was loyal to his king.

Behind Shaftesbury, the chief of the anti-Catholic party and the evil genius of Charles II, were grouped those whom hatred, ambition, avarice, ignorance and fear had armed against the Papists.

Between these two groups Charles II wavered, drawn towards the Catholics by his inward convictions, by his esteem for the queen whom he treated so ill, and by his affection for the brother whom he defended so feebly, but in his love of ease and pleasure and in cowardly supineness allowing himself to be made a mere tool in the hands of Shaftesbury and his following.

CHAPTER II

THE INSTIGATORS AND THE INSTRUMENTS OF
THE PLOT

I

Titus Oates—His antecedents—His unprincipled character—His bargain with Tonge—Description of Tonge—Pretended conversion of Oates—Gains admittance to the college at Valladolid—Then to that at St Omers—Is expelled—Tries again to deceive the Provincial—His threats.

IN order to accomplish his design for the extermination of the English Catholics by ensnaring them in the toils of his pretended plot, Shaftesbury sought an instrument worthy of the object. Such an instrument he found in Titus Oates.

The father of this man who has earned himself so odious a celebrity was a ribbon weaver, who became by turns an Anabaptist preacher and a minister of the Anglican Church. Titus followed in the same line. After studying at Cambridge he took orders in the Establishment and was appointed to various posts, from which, one after another, he was ejected for misconduct. There appear in history, from time to time, men so utterly given over to evil that it is impossible to discover in them a single redeeming feature. That such beings, who are in the moral order what monsters are in the physical, should exist is not surprising; the marvel is that such a being should be able, by dint of

audacity, to impose upon his countrymen in spite of his notorious vices and the patent falsehood of his fabrications.

Titus Oates was a man of infamous life, dangerously fertile imagination and unequalled hypocrisy, and his hatred of the Catholics was as tenacious as it was intense. He was, in Shaftesbury's hands, the chief instrument in the plot known by his name, and the development of which was favoured by the general discontent, the machinations of the minister and the leaven of religious fanaticism which, since the Reformation had done its work, had a latent existence in the heart of the English people.*

Oates, by his licentious life, had fallen into want, and applied for relief to Dr Tonge, rector of St Michael's in Wood Street, a man in whom weakness and credulity were combined with a disposition singularly mischievous and astute. His detestation of Catholics in general and of Jesuits in particular, against whom he was in the habit of publishing pamphlets every quarter of a year, had become a monomania. This Dr Tonge promised Oates his protection on condition that he would help him in his campaign.

Oates willingly entered into the proposed partnership, which would supply him with funds, and the two accomplices set to work to prepare their plan.

To ensure success they decided in the first place to

* Protestants themselves are now unanimous in acknowledging the Titus Oates plot to have been a fabrication from beginning to end. Already in 1829, in a memorable speech in Parliament during the discussion relating to Catholic emancipation, Lord Canning declared that the testimony of history justly stigmatized it with the character of perjury and fraud.

gain the confidence of those whom they intended to destroy. This share of the programme was undertaken by Oates. He pretended to become a convert to Catholicism, and made his abjuration to a priest of the name of Berry, himself a very doubtful sort of personage since he was by turns an Anglican minister, a Jesuit, a secular priest, then a Protestant, and in the end died as a Catholic. This man, so unstable in his own convictions, was easily deceived by the sacrilegious farce enacted by Titus Oates. But the latter, not content with having fraudulently entered the Catholic camp, resolved to go further and gain admittance into one of the houses of the Jesuits. On the strength of a recommendation he elicited from Berry to the fathers directing the English College at Valladolid he was allowed to enter it as a student.*

At the end of five months he was expelled for immorality; but, determined to gain his end, he addressed himself directly to the provincial of the English Jesuits, Father Whitbread. This father, who showed himself singularly wanting in the subtle sagacity popularly attributed to his order, was deceived by the tears and protestations of Oates, and allowed him to present himself at the college of St Omers, where he was admitted, December 10, 1677. There his conduct quickly aroused suspicion. The pupils as well as friends of the house appear to have at once arrived at a more accurate judgement than the pro-

* The English College at Valladolid, founded by Father Parsons, S.J., in the reign of Philip II, for the education of young Englishmen desirous of entering the priesthood, furnished numerous martyrs to the English mission. This seminary still exists, and is now under the direction of secular priests from England. The English College of St Omers was founded in 1592.

vincial as to the character of the singular candidate sent to them. A gentleman of position who chanced to be a guest at the college exclaimed, after having observed him, "What monster is this, that the Society is bringing up for itself?" * And it was with extreme repugnance that the Bishop of St Omers conferred on him the rite of confirmation. He himself one day let fall a significant remark, saying that he would be "either a Jesuit or a Judas."

On June 30, 1678, after a sojourn of six months, Titus Oates was expelled from St Omers as he had been from Valladolid, and for the same reasons. Notwithstanding his disgrace he again attempted to hoodwink the provincial; but Father Whitbread, being now better informed as to the man, refused to listen to him.

Returning to London, Oates resumed his relations with Tonge; but while busied with him in arranging the plot of which the Catholics were to be the victims, he persisted with a strange tenacity in trying to force himself into the intimacy of the Jesuits. They, however, warned by experience, remained insensible to his advances; whereupon he changed his supplications into threats, declaring that he was in possession of information by which he could seriously compromise certain fathers of the Society, but which he would undertake not to make use of on condition that the Jesuits would grant him an annual pension. The fathers, it need not be said, refused his insolent and unprincipled bargain.

* *Records*, v, 12. "Quale monstrum sibi nutrit Societas?"

II

Oates and Tonge find a protector first in Lord Danby, then in Lord Shaftesbury—Kirkby employed to reveal the pretended plot to the king—Letters forged to implicate the Jesuits.

In order to obtain credence from the public for the revelations they were formulating, Oates and Tonge resolved to secure the support of some well-known statesman. To this end they addressed themselves to Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and treasurer of the kingdom. Danby was a man of intelligence, but avaricious and corrupt. Pressed by want of money, he saw that the “Papists’ plot” propounded by Titus Oates would be a convenient means for enabling him to retrieve both his credit and his purse, and promised his protection to the two accomplices. When, later on, Danby fell into disgrace, Shaftesbury, his victorious rival, became the depository and collaborator of Oates’ revelations, manipulated them for his own benefit, and thereby laid the foundation of his political fortunes.

Such, according to the most serious and trustworthy historians, was the origin and development of the conspiracy. The two unscrupulous men who had forged it quickly became mere instruments in the hands of an equally unscrupulous master. This master at first was Danby, and after him Shaftesbury, of whom, if he did not invent the conspiracy, “this at least is certain, that he took it under his protection from its birth, and nursed it with solicitude till it arrived at maturity.”*

* Lingard, ix, 179.

To the names of Oates and Tonge must be added that of a third accomplice, Christopher Kirkby, a tax-collector, who was also employed occasionally in the king's laboratory. It was this man who was charged to warn the king that a formidable plot was organized by his Catholic subjects against his throne and life.

On August 13, 1678, when Charles was about to take his usual walk in the park, Kirkby approached him with a mysterious air, and, in an undertone, prayed him not to separate from the company as his life was in danger. Charles took little notice of the communication, and continued his walk; but in the evening he sent for the man and demanded an explanation. Kirkby came, accompanied by Tonge, who held in his hand a paper he had written, which purported to be a narrative of the discoveries made in regard to the plot, and wherein, under forty-three articles, were elaborated the accusations and confirmatory evidence so laboriously prepared. This document he handed to the king, who sent it to Lord Danby.

Danby, who knew all about it, pretended to be profoundly impressed by the gravity of the affair and by the imminent danger with which the king's sacred person was threatened. At the same time letters written by an unknown hand but bearing the signatures of certain English Jesuits were put into the post office in London. These contained allusions which very clearly related to a plot. They were addressed to Father Downes, Jesuit chaplain to the Duke of York; but, suspecting some snare, the father at once took them to the duke, advising him to have the matter examined into in order that the real authors of the letters might be discovered and punished.

III

Oates and Tonge take an oath before Sir Edmondbury Godfrey—He warns the Duke of York—Oates summoned before the Privy Council—His declarations—Lingard's summary—Incredulity of the king and his brother—Oates betrays himself in his answers.

WHILE these insidious manœuvres were preparing the public mind for the more circumstantial revelations held in reserve by Titus Oates, he himself was actively seeking to strengthen his cause by providing it with additional supporters. He, as well as Tonge, was surprised and disappointed at the indifference with which their overtures had been received by the king, and, in order to give more weight to their affirmations, they wished to invest them with a certain official authority. The two went, therefore, to a London magistrate, Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, and before him they both renewed under oath the affirmations of which Kirkby had communicated the substance to Charles II.

It so chanced that they had addressed themselves to an upright man, and one who was much attached to the Duke of York. In the revelations now made to him he foresaw danger to the heir to the throne, and lost no time in warning the Duke that the Catholics were accused of a conspiracy against the king's life. James, already roused by the incident of the forged letters, hastened, on receiving this fresh warning, to beg that the government might institute an inquiry, and, in so doing, unconsciously promoted the projects of Danby, who desired a pretext for bringing the matter before Parliament

On September 28, 1678, Titus Oates appeared for the first time before the Privy Council. Next day he was summoned thither again to make a circumstantial report, in presence of the king and the Duke of York, of the conspiracy which he boasted that he had discovered. His story is more like the ravings of a lunatic than the testimony of a reasonable man. We will summarize it briefly, following the historian Lingard, who divides under seven principal heads his long list of accusations. Oates affirmed (1) that the Jesuits had undertaken to re-establish the Catholic religion in England; (2) that, with this object, they were about to stir up an insurrection in Ireland and in Scotland, and to assassinate the king and also his brother, should the latter refuse to second their projects; (3) that they had at their disposal a sum of £100,000 placed in a bank; £10,000 had been given to them by Père Lachaise, confessor to Louis XIV, and £10,000 were promised them by the provincial of the Jesuits of Castile; (4) that a Benedictine monk named Pickering had shot at the king in the month of March previous, but, having missed him, had been punished by the conspirators; (5) that on April 25, 1678, the Jesuits, assembled at the White Horse Tavern in the Strand, selected the assassins for the murder of the king, and promised to pay them handsomely; (6) that it was he, Titus Oates, who himself had discovered all these facts, thanks to his pretended conversion, the Jesuits having even entrusted him with divers secret missions and admitted him to their private assembly in the Strand; (7) he declared that the Jesuits had caused the fire of London in 1666, and that they were planning another crime of the same

nature ; lastly, the pope had already nominated the bishops and other dignitaries to the episcopal sees and various ecclesiastical posts of the kingdom in readiness for the re-establishment of the Catholic religion, which would be effected after the assassination of the king.*

The council listened with amazement to this incredible narrative, of which we have here given but a feeble summary, and which the Protestant historian Macaulay † compares to the ravings of a man in the delirium of fever. The Duke of York did not hesitate to pronounce it to be an impudent imposture, in regard to which the author himself owned that he did not possess a single document in proof of his affirmations, and, moreover, that the character he gave of himself in his transactions sufficiently testified to his baseness and dishonesty. The king, who had with reluctance consented to allow Oates to appear before him, shared the indignation of his brother. He bade Oates describe the personal appearance of Don Juan of Austria, whose name figured in his recital. "He is tall, dark and thin," boldly replied the fellow. The king looked at his brother and smiled : they both knew the prince, who was short and fair. "It is clear that you have never seen him," said the king severely, and then asked in which of the Jesuits' houses in Paris Oates had seen Père Lachaise give ten thousand livres to the conspirators. "In the house of the Jesuits close to the Louvre." "Man," exclaimed the monarch, "the Jesuits have three houses

* Lingard, ix, 175, 176, where the list of accusations is given in detail.

Macaulay, i, 232, edit. 1849.

at Paris, but they have not one house within a mile of the Louvre." And leaving the council-chamber Charles exclaimed that the man was an infamous liar.*



IV

Oates procures the arrest of several Religious—Remonstrance of the Spanish ambassador, whose house was invaded—Numerous Catholics arrested—Popular bigotry stirred up.

STRANGE as the story they had heard appeared to the members of the council, several among them expressed an opinion that no man would dare to make such serious statements without at least some foundation of truth, and that, consequently, the matter must be proceeded with. Oates, being interrogated as to what documents he could produce in support of his assertions, said he had none, but that some would be found in the possession of persons whom he named ; and, in spite of the contemptuous attitude of the king and the mistrust still felt by many of the council, he succeeded in gaining over certain members by practising on their well-known hatred of the Papists. Thanks to Lord Danby, who was then in power, he procured the arrest of a certain number of religious whose papers, he declared, contained proofs of his assertions.

Father William Ireland, procurator of the English Jesuits, Father John Fenwick, charged in London with the interests of the college of St Omers, and Brother Thomas Pickering, of the Order of St Benedict, were at once apprehended, and, at the same time, possession was taken of all their books and papers.

The three prisoners, being brought before the

* *Records, v, 10.*

Privy Council, had no difficulty in proving their innocence, but were, nevertheless, sent to solitary confinement in the foul dungeons of Newgate. On the following day were arrested Father Thomas Whitbread, provincial of the English Jesuits, together with his *socius*, Father Edward Mico. These fathers, for the sake of safety, were lodged in a part of the Spanish embassy then occupied by Count Egmont. Both were seriously ill with fever when the soldiers, led by Oates, broke into their rooms, dragged them out of their beds and, while hauling them away, beat them brutally. Hearing a disturbance the ambassador hastened to the spot, and indignantly protested against this violation of his house. If, he said, the fathers were charged with treason, he would undertake that they should appear before the council on whatever day they might be summoned; but if they were arrested merely because they were priests he protested against this violation of his rights, the embassies having been at all times recognized as neutral ground where Catholic priests were in safety. The soldiers, intimidated by the count's determined attitude, consented to leave the two Jesuits under his protection for the time being, and contented themselves by seizing all their papers.

They next searched the houses of a great number of Catholics and threw several into prison, chiefly attacking those against whom Oates, for reasons of his own, had causes of resentment. At the same time the most alarming rumours were circulated among the people, whose credulity and prejudice in regard to the Papists made them an easy prey to the fears thus adroitly excited.

V

Excitement gradually subsides—Odious proceedings of Shaftesbury—Mysterious death of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey—A report spread that he had been murdered by the Papists—Agitation and terror of the people—Probable facts as to Godfrey's death.

By degrees, however, the popular agitation began to subside; the indifference of the king, who, without venturing openly to take the part of the accused, showed that he attached no importance to the denunciations of Oates, contributed not a little to discredit him; it might, therefore, be hoped that in time his wild accusations, having no proofs to support them, would of themselves come to nothing. But there were men in high places who were interested in fanning the flame of popular fanaticism, and who reckoned upon building on the ruin of the Catholics their own influence and fortunes. Danby's credit was declining, while that of Shaftesbury was on the increase; and it was he who, at this critical moment, became the protector and inspirer of Titus Oates and his accomplices.* Henceforth it was Shaftesbury who pulled the wires of the pretended conspiracy, directed its events, and made for himself a pre-eminent position as defender of the Anglican religion menaced by Jesuits and their partisans. A mysterious event which occurred at this time furnished Shaftes-

* See James, *Memoirs*, pp. 545-6. Also Temple, ii, p. 478, quoted by Lingard.—“ My Lord Shaftesbury sayd let the treasurer (Danby) cry as lowd as he pleases against Popery, and think to put himself at the head of the plot: I will cry a note lowder, and will soone take his place; which he failed not to make good.”—James, *Memoirs*, p. 546.

bury with the pretext he sought for reviving the popular agitation. Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, the magistrate before whom Oates and Tonge had sworn to the truth of their declarations, was, on October 12, 1678, found dead in a dry ditch on Primrose Hill in the environs of London. He was pierced through the heart with a short sword, and from the nature of the wound it appeared that death might have been caused by suicide rather than assassination. "His cane was fixed upright on the bank, his gloves lay near it on the grass, his rings remained on his fingers and his money in his purse."*

This tragedy served only too well the designs of Shaftesbury. He at once spread a report that Godfrey had been murdered by the Papists for having received depositions against them. Anglican preachers from their pulpits and popular orators in the streets vied with one another in denouncing the murderers to the vengeance of the nation. In ballads and pictures, printed and disseminated on the occasion, the same idea was repeated in a thousand different forms; and an account of the massacre of St Bartholomew, reprinted for the purpose, was scattered among the people to show to what excesses the Catholics could go.

Stirred up by such means as these the public, excited to a state of frenzy, lost all sense of equity or reason. The panic spread from London into the provinces, and a massacre of the Catholics seemed imminent.

Amongst other historians of weight Archdeacon Echard,† a Protestant, and Lingard are convinced that the unfortunate Godfrey died by his own

* Lingard, ix, 179.

† Ibid. iii, 508.

hand. His father committed suicide, and from him the son inherited a sombre and melancholy temperament. Far from being an enemy of the Catholics he was favourable to them, and was the friend of Edward Coleman, secretary to the young Duchess of York. Coleman was arrested in consequence of the first declarations made by Oates, and Godfrey was singularly affected at the circumstance. On October 12 he quitted his house after having burnt all his papers; several persons met him in the course of the day, walking rapidly with a preoccupied air; and that same evening he was found dead.

In vain did trustworthy witnesses attest that, for some time previously, the unfortunate magistrate had been melancholy and out of spirits; in vain it was urged that the Catholics would never do so ill-advised a thing as to get rid of a man who had shown himself their steadfast friend. Shaftesbury had proclaimed that Godfrey was their victim, and his calumny was accepted by the populace without argument or question; indeed, no man dared to question it, and thus risk incurring suspicion of complicity. In order to excite the minds of the public to the utmost, the body was carried in procession to the house of the deceased, the doors were thrown open during two days, and the populace invited to gaze on the mangled remains of the "Protestant martyr."* His brothers, who, according to the laws then in existence, could not have inherited the property of a suicide, maintained the theory of a murder, lent themselves to the lugubrious farce, and

* Lingard, ix, 180.

would not even allow the surgeons to examine the body lest the examination should raise any doubt as to the cause of death.



VI

The king's speech on opening Parliament—Parliament takes the matter into its own hands—Cowardly supineness of the king—Shaftesbury spreads wild alarm among the people—Arrest of Catholic peers—Defensive measures against the Papists.

IT was when the public frenzy was at its height that the king met his Parliament after its prorogation. In his opening speech he announced that he had learnt the existence of a plot against his person, but that he preferred to keep silence on the subject and to leave the matter to be investigated by the ordinary courts of law. This, however, was not at all the intention of Shaftesbury ; and the king, instead of boldly attesting, in the face of the country, his conviction that his Catholic subjects were innocent of the disloyal machinations laid to their charge—a conviction he freely expressed in private—played into his ministers' hands by his ambiguous declaration, which furnished a fresh weapon to their enemies.

The House of Commons hastened to announce its knowledge of the existence of a plot for the murder of the sovereign and the massacre of the Protestants throughout the kingdom. The House of Lords made a similar statement ; and Shaftesbury, profiting by the occasion, caused Oates and Tonge to repeat their depositions in the presence of Parliament. Both Houses, contrary to the king's recommendation, listened to the astounding narrative of the two accomplices,

and took the matter into their own hands, instead of leaving it, as the king had desired, in the hands of the magistrates.

The inquiry was thus transferred to the management of Shaftesbury and a committee under him. It was part of his plan to give as much publicity to the affair as possible. Having secured the support of both Houses of Parliament, he multiplied precautionary measures of an extraordinary kind, all calculated to add to the universal alarm and to prepare the public to accept the most monstrous accusations. Warrants were issued for the apprehension of five Catholic peers : the Earl of Powis, the Viscount Stafford, the Lords Petre, Arundel and Belasyse, who were accordingly arrested and committed to the Tower. In a short time the prisons of the metropolis were crowded with 2,000 Catholic prisoners, while all who refused the oaths of allegiance and spiritual supremacy, amounting to almost 30,000 persons, were compelled to leave the capital. In London itself military were posted in every direction, the guards of the palace were doubled, the trained bands of volunteers, to the number of 40,000 or 50,000 men, were sometimes kept all night under arms, and numerous patrols paraded the streets.

VII

The king, convinced of their innocence, leaves them to the mercies of their enemies—Yields point after point—The Catholic peers deprived of their right to sit in the Upper House—The contrivers of the plot produce a new witness—Bedloe's story—He accuses the queen—Frenzy of the people—Charles II intervenes on the queen's behalf.

THE king alone was unmoved by all this commotion. He repeatedly declared his disbelief in the plot, and lamented that his subjects should let themselves be made the dupes of a brazen impostor. And yet, in spite of his conviction of the loyalty of the accused, his sympathy with their religion and his affection for his brother, he basely bent before the storm, and granted one unjust concession after another.

On November 9, 1678, he informed the House that he was ready to approve of any measures having for their object the defence of the Protestant religion, and afterwards, although reluctantly, gave his assent to the Bill for the exclusion of Catholic peers from the House of Lords—a Bill which continued in force for two centuries.

Of the twenty-four peers* of the kingdom who professed the old faith only three consented to subscribe to the blasphemous formulary of the “Test.” †

* The peers whom this Act deprived of their seats in the House were the Duke of Norfolk, the Earls of Shrewsbury, Berkshire, Portland, Cardigan and Powis, the Viscounts Montague and Stafford, the Lords Mowbray, Audley, Stourton, Petre, Arundel, Hunsdon, Belasyse, Langdale, Teynham, Carrington, Widdrington, Gerard of Bromley and Clifford.

† By this Act all persons holding any public office were compelled

So far, as we have seen, the plot depended solely upon the testimony of Oates for its credit, a fact which its patrons found very embarrassing. The prisoners interrogated at the bar or before the committee had one and all protested their innocence, and also their ignorance of the existence of any such designs as those of which they were accused. As the law required the testimony of two witnesses, no prosecution had as yet been possible. It was not long, however, before a second witness was discovered, and one in all respects worthy of the first. This was a man of the name of Bedloe, who, after having been employed as a groom in England and as a courier abroad, had been repeatedly imprisoned for swindling transactions. He had just been released from Newgate when he heard that the king had offered a reward of £500 to any man who should discover the assassins of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, and at once resolved to be that discoverer and obtain the reward.

In his first deposition taken before the king and two secretaries of state, he averred that the Jesuit, Le Fevre, had informed him that he, with the aid of Walsh, another Jesuit, had stifled Godfrey between two pillows, and that he had been offered 2,000 guineas to help in removing the corpse. In his succeeding depositions he frequently contradicted himself, making statements quite at variance with his previous declarations. At first he knew nothing of the plot, but afterwards remembered that during his travels he had met with English monks, friars, Jesuits

to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, to receive the sacrament in the established Church, and to abjure all belief in the doctrine of Transubstantiation,

and nuns, all of whom had acquainted him with the great design. His memory improving as he went on, he remembered that an army of 30,000 friars and pilgrims was about to embark from Corunna for Milford Haven to join the Catholics of Wales and 40,000 troops secretly organized in England; and that, after murdering the king, the Dukes of Monmouth, Ormond and Buckingham and the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Papists under the Earl of Powis and Lord Petre were to utterly extinguish all who would not conform to the Catholic worship; and that there was not in England a Catholic of rank or credit who had not been sworn on the sacrament to aid the matter and to keep it secret. Bedloe afterwards went on to name the Catholic lords who were to form the new government to be founded on the ruins of the throne of Charles II. As for the queen, Catherine of Braganza, he accused her not only of having caused Godfrey to be stabbed by her servants, but also, and always in connivance with the Jesuits, of having attempted to poison her husband to avenge herself for his unfaithfulness. "It will excite surprise that in the three kingdoms there could be found an individual so simple or so prejudiced as to give credit to this marvellous tale of bloodshed and treason. But in times of general panic nothing is too absurd for the credulity of the public."*

Besides, the ground had been carefully prepared. The numerous arrests and countless search warrants by which the Catholics were harried night and day, the extraordinary precautions taken by the government confirmed in the minds of the people the existence of

* Lingard, ix, 187.

some mysterious and urgent danger. The king alone was undisturbed. He no more believed in Bedloe than he did in Titus Oates ; but, either from supineness or a sense of hopeless impotence in the matter, he failed to make any effort to overthrow, by an act of his royal power, this mighty structure of absurdities and lies.

So great was the popular panic that there was a question of sending the queen a prisoner to the Tower. This unhappy lady, who lived alone at Somerset House while her insolent rival, the Duchess of Portsmouth, ruled at Whitehall, was defenceless against the attacks of her enemies ; but, in spite of her religion rendering her an object of suspicion, the purity of her life, the tact and integrity of her conduct and her entire freedom from intrigue had won general esteem, and the House of Lords refused to sanction the proposal of the lower House that she should be arrested for high treason. The king himself did not forget that Shaftesbury, the self-elected protector of Oates, had eagerly advocated a project of divorce, and some remains of honourable feeling were awakened in his heart at the sight of this princess, alone in her adopted country and exposed to the sinister designs of an unscrupulous minister and his worthless crew. “I will never,” he sternly declared, “suffer an innocent woman to be oppressed ;” and the proposal was abandoned.

VIII

Shaftesbury pounces on some obscure men—Francis Corral—His answer—Shaftesbury's barbarous treatment of him—Miles Prance—Starved and threatened, accuses the Catholics and then retracts his words—Shaftesbury takes no notice of his retraction and acts upon them.

IT was now that Shaftesbury, still conscious of the insufficiency of evidence against the Catholics, made fresh endeavours to obtain it by bribing a few obscure persons, whose poverty might tempt them, for large rewards, to make whatever declarations he desired, and especially to swear that they knew the real assassins of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, and that these assassins were the Jesuits.

Francis Corral,* a hackney coachman, was arrested upon a charge of having taken the body of Sir E. Godfrey to Primrose Hill. In answer to Shaftesbury he denied all knowledge of it. Shaftesbury laid £500 down on the table and promised it to the poor man if he would confess the truth, and the fullest protection if he feared to speak. The man again repeated his utter ignorance. The earl replied that if he would not confess he should be put into a barrel of nails and rolled down a hill. The man answered, “What would you have me to say, my lord? I know nothing of the matter. Would you have me to accuse other people to bring them into my condition?” The earl then threatened him with death, and he was committed to

* The account of Corral's treatment is taken from Echard, a contemporary historian and Protestant, archdeacon of Stowe, *History of England*, 503 et seq. Quoted in *Records*, v, 29.

Newgate. Here he was laid “in vast heavy irons” in a dungeon, and after some hours was taken out again so faint with the foulness of the place that he swooned away, and had to be restored by cordials. The same day he was again examined by Shaftesbury, and, in reply to his bullying, said hastily, “What would you have me confess? I know no more than your lordship does, and it may be not so much.” The earl then told the gaoler to take him and starve him to death, “at which the poor man wept,” and with imprecations declared that he knew no more than the child unborn. He was accordingly kept in Newgate, heavily ironed, in the condemned hole from Thursday evening till Sunday noon without food or drink, which drove the man into such despair that he was tempted to commit suicide, but was prevented by the knife dropping out of his hand, being too weak to hold it. On the next Monday he was taken to the lords’ secret committee. Shaftesbury, assuming a pleasant countenance, again offered him the former great rewards to confess, upon which the poor man, falling on his knees, said: “I know nothing of it; and before I wrong any man I will die immediately.” The earl then threatened him that he should rot in Newgate for awhile and then be hung, and again urged him to confess rather than hear the dreadful sentence. “Yes, my lord,” cried the poor man, “it will be a dreadful hearing; but, my lord, it will be a more dreadful hearing for me at the Lord’s bar if I should wrongfully accuse any man. It will be a more dreadful hearing when it shall be said, ‘Take him away, devil, for he hath falsely accused those he knew no hurt by.’” The brutal Shaftesbury ordered him back to Newgate.

The man pleaded he had a wife and children. The earl said, "Let them starve." The man was kept heavily chained in the same hole for nearly seven weeks, and without fetters for seven more, when, at length, another person swore that Godfrey was carried there on horseback; thereupon the poor coachman was released on bail, but so injured by the irons that he could not drive a coach for eight weeks after.

Miles Prance, a silversmith, broke down under the treatment he received. Being kept for several days together without food he was taken into a room where a plentiful meal was prepared, but which he might not touch before making the required confession. In the state of weakness, physical and mental, to which his treatment had reduced him, he affirmed everything proposed to him by Shaftesbury and then retracted it. Being threatened afresh, he accused the Catholics of Godfrey's murder, and himself of having been their accomplice. Afterwards, seized with remorse, he threw himself at the feet of the king and swore that his declaration was false. But no time had been lost in utilizing his story, and three servants of the queen, whose names had been suggested to him, were arrested as the murderers of Godfrey.

Now began the long and ghastly series of pretended trials and judicial murders which for years disgraced the records of the time. The popular madness of this period, writes Professor R. Gardiner,* is without example in our history. The voice of reason and the rights of justice were equally disregarded by a frenzied people.

* *Introduction to English History*, 159.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST EXECUTIONS

I

Unfavourable circumstances under which Catholics appeared before the tribunals—Especially the Jesuits—Chief Justice Scroggs—His character and methods.

THE Catholics incriminated by Oates appeared before the tribunals under circumstances which gave them no chance of establishing their innocence. Kept in solitary confinement, not allowed legal advisers or any communications with their friends, often not even knowing what offence they were charged with, they received notice of their trial in the evening and next morning were placed at the bar.

Moreover, in addition to the ill-will of their enemies, a combination of unfortunate circumstances had, by a strange fatality, arisen to render the defence of the Jesuits in particular difficult at this time. As we have already seen, these religious were accused by Oates of having plotted the murder of the king at a consultation held by them on April 25, 1668, at the White Horse Tavern in the Strand. Now, to prove that no such meeting was held there they could not appeal to the landlord of the tavern, for he was dead, and his widow and former servants could not be found. It was besides impossible for them to furnish particulars of any meeting of their order without

endangering the lives of others as well as their own. There had in fact been, on April 24, 1678, the ordinary triennial council, in accordance with the rules of the Society, but it had met, not in a tavern, but at the royal palace of St James, the residence of the Duke of York. Oates had discovered that they had had a meeting somewhere, but did not know for what object or in what place, and for the sake of the Duke of York the fathers kept silence on the subject.

In any case, Oates's victims were condemned beforehand by the deluded public, and their judge at the outset of the proceedings openly declared himself their enemy.

The Lord Chief Justice, Scroggs, proved himself indeed the worthy auxiliary of his protector, Shaftesbury. Reduced to penury by a dissolute course of life he too resolved to replenish his purse at the expense of the Papists. Throughout the trial his attitude was invariably that of an accuser rather than a judge. The informers he treated with the greatest deference and consideration, suggesting explanations, ignoring or excusing their contradictory evidence and repelling the imputations cast upon their character. The prisoners, on the contrary, were repeatedly interrupted and insulted, their witnesses brow-beaten and jeered at, and their condemnation hailed by the spectators with acclamations which were rather encouraged than repressed by the court.* Even Burnet, in spite of his known hatred of Catholics, owned that it was "a lamentable thing to see a man so evil, ignorant and poor" raised to so important a position.†

* Lingard, ix, 190.

† *Records*, v, 37.

II

Edward Coleman—His correspondence with Père Lachaise—His imprudence and exaggerated language—Trial and condemnation—Courageously meets his death.

GIVEN over to the mercy of a judge like this, deprived of all means of defending themselves, the Catholic prisoners notwithstanding their innocence had no chance of escape. The first victim to the perjuries of Oates and Bedloe was Edward Coleman, secretary to the young Duchess of York, Mary Beatrice of Modena.

The son of an Anglican minister in Suffolk and a graduate of the university of Cambridge recently converted to the Catholic faith, Coleman was an energetic and religious man, but extravagant and meddling as well as singularly deficient in the prudence and caution necessary for one who was occupying a post of difficulty in these dangerous times. The youth and character of the duchess exonerated her from the suspicion of intrigue, but the position of her husband as heir to the crown exposed him more than any one else to suspicion and attack; hence the obligation of those attached to her service to take extreme precautions against giving any handle to calumny. Coleman's papers were seized, and, although they contained nothing which implied the existence of any plot, it was found that he had regularly corresponded with Père Lachaise, the confessor of Louis XIV, and on the copies he had preserved of his own letters were based the grounds of his condemnation. Protestant and Catholic historians

agree that the worst that can be said of these letters is that they were highly imprudent [and rhetorical] and showed in the writer a tendency to political intrigue, but nothing treasonable.

The most compromising of all the letters was one asking for 20,000 livres for certain expenses, the result of which was to "give the greatest blow to the Protestant religion that it had received since its birth.*

It was at once declared that these words alluded to a plot for the murder of the king, although they really referred to an intended endeavour to effect the restitution of the Duke of York to the post of high admiral of the English navy, and to obtain liberty of conscience for the Catholics.

At his trial Coleman maintained that his only object in his letters, which he owned were ill-advised, was to procure money and the toleration of the Catholic worship; that he had never seen either Oates or Bedloe, his accusers, before his apprehension, and that both had perjured themselves in their testimony. Oates, who had deposed to having had numerous transactions with him, showed in presence of the council that he was unacquainted with his person, and then pretended that, being dazzled by the lights and fatigued in mind, he could not see clearly, nor could he remember what the transactions were he had had with the prisoner.

It was in vain that the accused asked for counsel to defend him. On November 26, after a violent and abusive address from Scroggs, he was condemned to death.

* Lingard, ix, 178.

Coleman received the sentence calmly, but energetically repelled the accusation of any thought of regicide. Several members of Parliament visited him in prison, offering a full pardon if he would confess the conspiracy ; but he gave them the same answer that he had steadfastly maintained throughout, that it was impossible that he could confess a plot of whose existence he was utterly ignorant.

On December 3, 1678, he was taken to Tyburn, and this man, whose only crime was imprudence, tinctured it may be with vanity, was heroic in the face of death. He addressed the people, again declaring his innocence, and then prayed with admirable faith and earnestness to the last moment.* He was executed with all the horrible details of the sentence against traitors—hung, cut down while still breathing, stripped, the heart and entrails torn out and thrown into a fire close by the gibbet, and the body beheaded and quartered. “With the trial and execution of Coleman,” writes the eminent Protestant historian, J. R. Green, “a series of judicial murders began, which even now can only be remembered with horror.”†



III

Death of Father Mico in prison—Death of Father Downes, former chaplain to the Duke of York—His prudent and blameless conduct—He dies in prison.

ON this same day, while the unfortunate secretary of the Duchess of York was dying at Tyburn in frightful torments, other victims of the pretended plot were expiring in their dungeons. Father Edward Mico,

* Challoner, ii, 190.

† Green's *Hist. of England*, viii, 423, edit. 1879.

who was forty-eight years old, had been a student at St Omers, and then, entering the Society of Jesus, became the habitual companion or *Socius* of the provincial, with whom he lodged in a part of the Spanish embassy, and with whom he was arrested in the night of September 29.

As we have previously related, Count Egmont, by his determined expostulations, obtained that the two fathers, who were seriously ill, might remain for a time under his roof as prisoners. During this earlier phase of their captivity, Father Hamerton, one of their brethren, obtained access to them. "I visited each one," he writes, "every day; and albeit Mr Whitbread and Mr Mico had a guard of twelve soldiers upon them I did not omit my ordinary visits, sometimes dressed as a gentleman, at other times in the habit of an apothecary's apprentice, with a glass in my hand and an apron before me, in which garb I entered with much freedom into their rooms, although the sentry stood at the door. I often heard their confessions, and spoke as comfortably to them as occasion would permit."*

As soon as he could be moved, Father Mico was transferred to Newgate; but his long malady, the shock of the arrest and the violence which accompanied it, anxiety for his brethren and, lastly, the stench of the dungeon killed him. On December 4, the day kept by his brethren as the feast of St Francis Xavier, he was "found dead on his knees, oppressed by his irons."† But his soul had "escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler," and the captive was free.‡

* *Records*, v, 250.

† Challoner, from an MS. in his possession. *Missionary Priests*,

‡ Challoner, ii, 205.

Not many days afterwards another Jesuit, Father Downes, also died in prison. Under the name of Bedingfield he had formerly been chaplain to the Duke of York, and in this difficult position had earned the esteem of all who knew him. Wholly absorbed in his ministry he led at court the simple and mortified life of a true religious. We are told that he especially loved to minister to the poor, hear their confessions and fortify them amid the hardships of the times, and, to this end, although weak in health and suffering from an incurable malady, would take long journeys on foot, in the roughest weather, to help and comfort his lowly penitents.

Even to the Protestants his life appeared so harmless that he was permitted to attend the Duke of York upon his taking command of the English fleet against the Dutch. During these naval operations, which brought so much glory to the royal admiral, his chaplain won the affection and respect of all by his devotedness, especially to the wounded, which enabled him to exercise a fruitful apostolate among those around him.

It was to Father Downes that Titus Oates addressed the forged letters already mentioned, which, full of perfidious insinuations, were apparently written by English Jesuits of note. Suspecting some snare, he at once gave these letters to the Duke of York, who placed them in the hands of the king.

Although on this occasion Charles declared his conviction of the loyalty of his brother's chaplain, Father Downes was apprehended on suspicion of treason. He was ill at the time of his arrest, and on December 21, his end being hastened by the intoller-

able foulness of his cell, he expired in the Gatehouse prison as truly a martyr as his brethren butchered at Tyburn.



IV

Father William Ireland—Royalist traditions of his family—His arrest—The injustice of his trial—His witnesses are maltreated—He sends his diary to the king, who is much troubled after reading it—Yields to pressure and allows the prisoner to be executed.

THE next victim whom we must follow to Tyburn, the Calvary of our English martyrs, is Father Ireland. He came of a race whose devotion to the Stuarts was hereditary. His father and one of his uncles died fighting for Charles I, and he was nearly related to the Penderells of Boscobel who, after the battle of Worcester, saved the life of Charles II. Like most of the young Catholic gentry of the time, he was educated at the college of St Omers, leaving it to enter the Society of Jesus. For some years he filled the humble office of chaplain to the English *Clarisses* or Poor Clares at Gravelines. This monastery, founded under James I, by an admirable woman whose life and labours we have related elsewhere,* was peopled with religious belonging to the old Catholic families of England, in whom the fire of persecution had but renewed and strengthened the vigour of the ancient faith.

Amid these tranquil surroundings Father Ireland was preparing unawares for the approaching conflict. In 1677 his superiors sent him to London as temporal procurator of the English province. He, too, like his brethren, was arrested in the night by Oates and his

* *Quatre Portraits de Femmes: Mary Ward.* Firmin-Didot, Paris.

satellites, and thrown into a dungeon of Newgate. There he was loaded with heavy chains, his fetters being so tightly fastened as to eat into the flesh and lay bare the bones of his limbs. On December 17, 1678, he, with other Catholic prisoners, appeared before the tribunal sitting at the Old Bailey.

The charge brought against them was that they had all conspired for the murder of the king, and that the Jesuits in particular had resolved upon it in their meeting held on April 24, at the White Horse Tavern, at which meeting Oates averred that he had been present.

The most outrageous injustice marked the proceedings, every circumstance that told in favour of the accused being systematically suppressed. Thus Father Ireland was charged with having received from Père Lachaise large sums of money to be used for inciting a general rising of the Catholics. The father's papers, all of which were seized at the time of his arrest, contained no trace of any such transactions: care was taken therefore not to produce these documents, which would have proved his innocence. In the same way was ignored the fact that, as Titus Oates was known to be residing at St Omers at the date of the pretended consult in the Strand, he could not possibly have been present. Lastly, to prevent Father Ireland's witnesses from appearing, the date of his trial was suddenly advanced, rendering it impossible for many to arrive in time. Those who were able to be present were scarcely allowed to speak; brow-beaten by Scroggs, interrupted by the bystanders and roughly handled by the mob, some became confused in their answers and others fled.

Nevertheless Father Ireland had in his possession a document which convincingly established his innocence. Oates and Bedloe deposed that in August, 1678, he was in London, busied in arranging the plot. In a journal, written by his own hand, day by day, was proof that from August 3 to September 14 he was absent from the capital. This journal, containing a consecutive record of his daily movements and occupations, he sent to the king. After he had perused it, Charles appeared greatly troubled. But there was at that time an acute political crisis, the thought of which deterred him from interfering in the cause of justice on behalf of a Catholic priest; and, although desirous of saving him, he yielded to the maniacal bigotry stirred up by Shaftesbury and left this holy religious and loyal subject to the will of his enemies. On hearing his sentence Father Ireland was so overjoyed that he returned thanks to the bench for conferring upon him the greatest of all earthly favours.



V

John Grove, sentenced with Father Ireland—Last moments of the two martyrs—Insults of the mob—Calm of the victims—Honour paid to Father Ireland's remains—Favours obtained by his intercession.

TOGETHER with Father Ireland, Thomas Pickering, a Benedictine lay-brother, was condemned, but his execution was delayed; and also John Grove, who passed for Father Ireland's servant, but was probably a lay-brother of the Society, and in any case showed himself faithful and devoted to the last.*

The king, who apparently felt remorse for his con-

* *Records*, v, 40.

duct in regard to Father Ireland, made a unique exception in his favour by sending him, on the eve of his execution, a Capuchin father attached to the Spanish embassy, Augustine de Losingham, who administered to him the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, and attended him to the gallows. He afterwards wrote a touching account of the father's last hours, testifying to his great innocence, constancy and alacrity to his last breath.

According to custom, the prisoners, bound on a hurdle, were drawn from Newgate to Tyburn, "while," writes Bishop Challoner, "the crowd abused them all the way," pelting them with mud and rotten eggs, and even spitting upon them. The calumnies of Oates had borne their evil fruit, and the brutality of the populace was not disarmed by the serenity of the two martyrs.* At Tyburn Father Ireland addressed the people, and his words have come down to us through some who were present. He protested his innocence, and, faithful to the loyalty of his race, declared his devoted attachment to the king. "As for the Catholics that are here," he said, "we desire their prayers for a happy passage to a better world and that God would be merciful to all Christian souls. And as for all our enemies, we earnestly desire that God would pardon them again and again, for we pardon them heartily from the bottom of our souls."†

* In the archives of the province is a letter from the vice-provincial, Father John Warner, in which it is recorded that, upon the hurdle, on his way from Newgate to Tyburn, Father Ireland displayed so joyful and composed a countenance that an English nobleman present said he had never, in the whole course of his life, witnessed so sweet and divine an expression.

† *Records*, v, 229.

When he had finished speaking, a father of the Society, who was present in disguise, gave the two victims the last sacramental absolution. Then the cart was drawn away. When Father Ireland was taken down he was dead, and the horrible butchery prescribed by the law was carried into effect on a corpse. John Groves, courageous and humble to the last, spoke but little. "We are innocent," he said; "we are put to death unjustly, but we pray God to pardon the authors of our death."*

Contemporary writings speak of the veneration rendered by the Catholics to their beloved martyrs and also of the favours attributed to their intercession. They relate how wonderful cures were wrought by linen dipped in Father Ireland's blood, more than forty persons attesting that they were cured by this means.† One of the chaplains of Queen Catherine of Braganza, writing in 1685 to Father de Noyelle, general of the Society of Jesus, tells him of the heavenly fragrance emanating from the relics of Father Ireland, deposited in the private chapel of the queen.‡

* Challoner, ii, 193.

† *Records*, v, 230.

‡ A rare work, printed at Prague in 1683, entitled *Brevis Relatio felicis Agonis*, etc., affirms that a document was drawn up to perpetuate the remembrance of these extraordinary favours, and that it was signed by the persons who had thus been cured and also by "an illustrious personage," who is supposed to have been Count Egmont, the Spanish ambassador.

VI

Trial of the pretended assassins of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey—Hill, Green and Berry accused—Their defence—Their execution—Attitude of the queen, when made the object of attack.

WHILE the trial of Father Ireland was proceeding, that of the pretended murderers of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey was also taking its course. We have seen by what cruel methods Shaftesbury had extorted from Prance the confession which he afterwards retracted, but which was utilized all the same to procure the destruction of innocent men.

Three men of obscure condition had been named by Prance as having been involved in the murder of Godfrey: they were Laurence Hill, a serving-man, Robert Green and Henry Berry, in service at Somerset House, the residence of Catherine of Braganza. The two former were Catholics, the latter a Protestant. When brought to trial on February 10, 1679, and accused of having aided the Jesuits, "the principal authors of Godfrey's murder," they produced witnesses worthy of credit, who had seen them far away from the spot where Godfrey was found, at the day and hour when, according to Bedloe, they committed the murder. Also, they pointed out numberless contradictions and absurdities in the denunciations of their accusers. All was in vain: their ruin was resolved upon beforehand, and they were condemned to die.*

A Protestant historian, whose impartiality is un-

* Challoner, ii, 195.

questioned, says, with regard to this matter, "they had to yield to the phrenzy of the times, perjury and calumny having then become so common that nothing can reasonably be concluded from denunciations of this nature."*

Hume, by no means favourable to Catholics, adds that the evidence of Bedloe and of Prance is contradictory and full of gross absurdities.†

The two Catholics, Hill and Green, were executed on February 21, 1679, and these lowly and obscure victims of injustice and lying met their death with admirable dignity. Hill addressed a few words to the spectators, and again affirmed his innocence, "before God, and before men and angels. I die as I have lived, a Roman Catholic, and I ask the Catholics here present to pray for me." He then prayed for the king, and for his "poor nation," and ended by saying, "I bid you all farewell in Jesus Christ, into whose hands I commend my spirit."

Robert Green, who was old and infirm, spoke more briefly, and with touching simplicity: "I have never seen Sir Edmonbury Godfrey, alive or dead. If false witnesses have testified against me, I cannot help it. I pray God to bless my king and all his people."‡

One of the functionaries present saying to him that he had been judged with equity, the old man, not wishing at that last moment to begin a useless argument, simply answered: "I pray God pardon all."

Berry was executed a few days afterwards. Like the two Catholics, he died affirming his

* *Baker's Chronicle*, p. 689.

† *Narrative of the Titus Oates Plot*, p. 190.

‡ *Challoner*, ii, 105.

innocence. "I am innocent," he said. "Jesus, receive my soul!"

During this time the queen, whose servants were being seized and put to death in defiance of all justice, was herself the object of the most monstrous accusations. Neglected by her husband after the first weeks of her marriage, unpopular because of her religion, a foreigner in a hostile country, Catherine of Braganza showed herself in this critical position worthy of the religion she professed and the valiant blood that flowed in her veins. Strong in her innocence she remained calm in the midst of the tempest, and Charles II, impressed by the dignity of his wife in her isolation, showed her, in this time of peril, a deference to which she had long been unaccustomed.*



VII

Thomas Pickering, Benedictine—Is accused of attempting regicide—
His execution delayed—Calm heroism of the victim—His last words, and his death.

BROTHER THOMAS PICKERING, professed at the Benedictine monastery at Douai, who was tried together with Father Ireland, was also one of those who had special claims on the gratitude of Charles II, his father having died fighting beneath the royal standard during the civil war. For this particularly peace-loving and gentle brother Oates had invented a prominent part in the ghastly farce he had elaborated, accusing him of having repeatedly attempted to shoot the king when taking his accustomed walks. By a strange chance, said Oates,

* Strickland, v, 645.

the pistol being badly charged failed to go off, and in punishment for his neglect Pickering had received a certain number of lashes, but was promised 30,000 shillings as the price of his crime, in return for which he had promised to say 30,000 Masses.

The absurdity of this story was evident. Pickering, a shy and quiet man, had never, to the knowledge of those who knew him, handled fire-arms in his life; besides, not being a priest, he could not say Mass. But these absurdities did not hinder his condemnation. He was sentenced at the same time as Father Ireland and John Grove, although not executed until four months afterwards.

Challoner attributes this delay either to the remorse of Charles, who, convinced of the innocence of the condemned, was desirous of saving him, or else to the hope on the part of the ministers of wearying their prisoner and extorting information from him against his brethren in the faith.*

Pickering was kept in prison till May 9, the day that he was taken to Tyburn to die. The peace and gladness that beamed in his countenance much impressed the surrounding crowd, as also did his hearty protestations of loyalty to his sovereign. Some one present reproached him with being a priest. "No," he answered with a smile, "I am but a lay-brother." After praying for his enemies he tranquilly mounted the fatal cart, the rope was put round his neck and a cap drawn over his face. A few moments before the cart was driven from under him one of the spectators called out that at this solemn moment he ought to confess his guilt. In an instant the martyr

* Challoner, ii, 193.

snatched away the cap that covered his features, and said with a bright smile, “Is this the countenance of a man that dies under so gross a guilt?” “And so,” adds Challoner, “he died smiling,” closing a lowly and laborious life by a glorious death. “Many,” he continues, “regretted him, for they esteemed him a very harmless man, and of all men living the most unlikely and unfit for that desperate undertaking of which he was accused.”

CHAPTER IV

TRIAL OF THE FIVE JESUITS

I

Trial of Father Whitbread, provincial of the English Jesuits—His character—His presentiment—His prophetic allocution to the *Jesuits at Liège—Interview with Mary Minshull.

NOTWITHSTANDING that the accusers were men of infamous repute and their testimony full of absurdities and contradictions, the prosecution of the Catholics continued its course, and, from the partiality of the judges, ended almost invariably in the condemnation of the accused.

The bigotry of the nation, adroitly kept alive by those whose interest it was to ruin the Papists, blinded men's minds to an extent which at the present day seems incredible, and the hatred of the crafty and the credulity of the ignorant were alike served by the supineness and cowardice of the king.

On June 13, six months after the martyrdom of Father Ireland, Father Thomas Whitbread, provincial of the English Jesuits, was brought up the second time before the bar of the Old Bailey. On his former appearance, no witnesses having been obtainable in support of the charges against him, he had been remanded.

Before following the different phases of the trial in which the condemnation of the accused was already

resolved upon, let us observe more closely the singularly attractive personality of this provincial of the English Jesuits, on whom in those difficult days lay the responsibility of governing his scattered and proscribed brethren. He bore his heavy burden with gentleness and dignity, accepted uncomplainingly the hardships it involved, and gave to his subjects the example of martyrdom with the same simplicity that he had, in more tranquil days, given the example of apostolic devotion and fidelity to the rule.

Thomas Whitbread, sometimes called by the borrowed name of Harcourt, was sixty-one years old in 1679. He entered the Society of Jesus at the age of eighteen; for thirty-two years he laboured in England as a missionary priest, and only a year had elapsed since he had been made provincial.

In the fulfilment of his new duties he showed himself kind and considerate towards his subordinates, serene in the midst of dangers, but, together with a great simplicity, possessed of a lively sense of the honour of the Society to which he belonged and of the province entrusted to his guardianship.

It was to Father Whitbread in his quality of provincial that Titus Oates, as we have seen, presented himself after his expulsion from St Omers, in the endeavour to obtain admission to another house of the order, and by him he was formally refused. Besides, a strong presentiment already impressed on the mind of Father Whitbread the conviction that a formidable blow was about to fall upon the English mission. There was at that particular time nothing which seemed to justify this strong impression. Hard as the times were for Catholics,

they were no harder than they had been for a hundred years; and, indeed, so far, the reign of Charles II had been less rigorous in regard to them than the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. Immediately after his election in 1678 the provincial visited the houses of the English Jesuits in the Low Countries, and on St James' Day, July 25, was at Liége,* where a number of the younger religious were assembled for the renewal of vows. On this occasion, preaching upon the gospel for the day, he chose for his text, *Potestis bibere calicem quem ego bibiturus sum? Dicunt ei, Possumus*—"Can you drink the chalice which I am to drink? They say to him, We can." At first he dwelt on the discipline and training of college life; and then, after observing that the times were now indeed quiet but God only knew how long they would be so, he began to speak of chains, tortures and death endured for Jesus Christ. Father Joseph Wakeman,† who was present, has transmitted to us the very words of this prophetic sermon, which the young athletes of the future, grouped around their leader, listened to with indescribable emotion.‡ Repeating his text, *Potestis bibere calicem?* he impressively continued, "Can you undergo a hard persecution? Are you contented to be falsely betrayed and injured and hurried away to prison? *Possumus*: We can, blessed be God. *Potestis bibere?* Can you suffer the hardship of a gaol?

* From 1614 to 1625 the English Jesuits had a novitiate at Liége; in 1625 this novitiate was transferred to Watten, near St Omers, and the house at Liége became until 1773 a centre of theological studies.

† Joseph Wakeman entered the order in 1665, died at Watten in 1720. His brother, Sir George Wakeman, the queen's physician, was one of the Catholics accused by Oates.

‡ *Records*, v, 235.

Can you sleep on straw and live on hard diet? Can you lie in chains and fetters? Can you endure the rack? *Possumus*: We can, blessed be God. *Potestis bibere*? Can you be brought to the bar and hear yourself falsely sworn against? Can you patiently receive the sentence of an unjust judge, condemning you to a painful and ignominious death, to be hanged, drawn and quartered? *Possumus*: We can, blessed be God!" And each time he uttered these emphatic words he clasped his hands and lifted up his eyes to heaven.

While he was speaking thus, continues Father Wakeman, his prophetic gaze seemed to behold in the near future the dungeons of Newgate and all their horrors, the gallows of Tyburn and all the torments there, his own blood and the blood of his brethren poured out for the Church and, beyond this sea of sufferings, the palms of triumph and eternal peace.

His inspired appearance and ringing voice gave his words an extraordinary power. His young hearers held their breath as they listened to him. Never, we are told, did any one of them forget this memorable discourse, which struck them all the more because at that time an interval of unusual calm prevailed in England. But two months later all had changed, and the words of Father Whitbread were receiving their fulfilment.

This foresight into the future was manifested on another occasion, about the same time. Mary Minshull, an English religious at Ghent, received a visit from the provincial the day before his departure for England. He advised her to tell him then all that she might wish to say to him, because she would

never see him again in this life. The sister objected to this, that his position as provincial would oblige him to visit from time to time the houses of his order in the Low Countries. He glanced upwards with a smile and made no answer, but on taking leave, said gaily, "Well, I shall never see this grate again." Then, seeing the good sister's emotion, he cheered and encouraged her with his usual kindness.*



II

The incident of the forged letters arouses the suspicion of the provincial—He is arrested and questioned—His dignified and courageous bearing—Insufficiency of evidence against him—Second trial.

Two months only after his return to England was the cup of suffering which he had foreseen presented to Father Whitbread, and we shall see with what courage it was drained to the very dregs.

The incident of the forged letters sent to Father Downes led the provincial to infer the existence of a conspiracy against the Catholics, and especially against the Jesuits. He also remembered the singular candidate who had solicited his admission into the company; and, without being aware probably of the full extent of the danger, he divined that Titus Oates was an unscrupulous and formidable enemy. Shortly afterwards the plot was proclaimed, and in spite of the king's declaration that Oates was a lying scoundrel, Father Whitbread, on the strength of his accusation, was arrested.

While on account of illness he remained under guard at the Spanish embassy, he was examined at

* Letter of Mary Minshull. Archives of Oscott College.

great length by a deputation from the committee of the House of Commons. Enfeebled as he was by sickness and anxious as to the fate of the province under his charge, he nevertheless was fully equal to the difficulties of his situation, answering with simplicity and dignity the insidious questions with which he was plied. "Concerning the question of religion," he said, "I acknowledge myself to be a priest of the Society of Jesus, and provincial of the English province. If this be a crime, I hope to recover strength enough to be enabled to suffer for it on the gallows. As for the plot you speak of, I solemnly and without hesitation declare that I am ignorant of its existence. I speak with an intimate knowledge of persons and things, and I am very certain that the members of my order are equally innocent."*

When taken from his lodging to Newgate, being too weak to walk, he was carried thither in a sedan chair. There he lay for three months in a noisome dungeon until, on December 17, 1678, he appeared before the tribunal, and heard Father Ireland, John Grove and Thomas Pickering sentenced to death. For himself, the testimony as yet being insufficient, he was remanded to Newgate, where he remained in solitary confinement another six months. Lastly, on June 13, 1679, he was again brought to the bar, charged with regicide.

* *Records*, v, 32.

III

The provincial's companions—James Corker—His character—His trial delayed—William Barrow—Is arrested—Brought before the Privy Council—Charles II tries to save him—John Fenwick—His sufferings in prison.

AROUND the provincial of the English Jesuits five religious formed as it were a guard of honour. One, Dom James Corker, a Benedictine, a zealous missionary of generous and energetic disposition, alone among the six prisoners escaped death. As soon as the proceedings began he protested against the injustice with which he had been treated. He had only been told on the eve of his trial that it was to take place next day, and he demanded time in which to prepare his defence. This delay was granted. A month later he was again brought to the bar, acquitted as a conspirator, but condemned to death as a priest. The sentence was not immediately executed, and was afterwards commuted; thus Father Corker, kept in perpetual imprisonment, became, as will be seen, an angel of consolation to his fellow-sufferers for the faith.

William Barrow, often called Waring or Harcourt, after being a student at St Omers had for thirty-five years been a missionary in London. He was superior of the district placed by the Jesuits under the vocable of St Ignatius, and was one of the first marked out by Oates as a notable prey. For some time Father Barrow eluded those who were seeking his life, although, deaf to the entreaties of friends, he refused to quit London, where he knew his ministrations to be

useful to souls. Every day he changed his abode and also his garb, but under all his various disguises maintained the grave and quiet manners of a religious. The maid-servant at an inn where he sometimes lodged suspected from his reserved habits that he was a popish priest, and denounced him as such to the pursuivants. He was apprehended in May, 1679, and questioned before the king's Privy Council, where his white hair and venerable countenance excited the interest of some of the members. Charles II in particular appeared troubled, and endeavoured to open for him a way of escape by saying that doubtless the prisoner was ignorant of the laws forbidding any Jesuit to live in England. "I could have fled," the father answered, "but I did not wish to flee; the interests of the cause I serve restrained me. My arrest, my chains, my captivity, my death itself will be no surprise to me. For twenty years I have been praying to God to send me these things, and at last He has granted my desire." At these firm words the king was silent.

John Caldwell, whose borrowed name was Fenwick, had almost from his childhood professed the true faith. Being cast off by his relations on account of his conversion he found a home first in the college of St Omers, then in the Jesuit novitiate at Watten in Flanders. The long months that this good and pious man was kept in prison were truly months of torture. His heavy chains wore into his flesh, forming wounds so deep and envenomed as to endanger his life.

IV

Anthony Turner—Convert and theologian—Gives himself up to the pursuivants—John Gavan—Evangelizes Wolverhampton—His eloquence—His courageous defence.

ANTHONY TURNER, like John Caldwell, was a convert to the faith. His mother, who had embraced it in spite of immense difficulties, had paid for her courage by a hidden martyrdom prolonged through many years in the privacy of home. The two sons of this valiant woman entered the Society of Jesus. Edward, the elder, died in prison in London in 1681; the younger, Anthony, was superior of the Jesuit missionaries of the Worcester district when the plot broke forth. An indefatigable and laborious missionary, he had a great talent for preaching and controversy, enlightening minds, unravelling perplexities and winning souls to obedience to the Church of Christ; he had also an ardent desire to suffer for the faith, even, according to some writers, giving himself up to the magistrates as a priest, but, as to this, accounts vary.

John Gavan, also a Jesuit, was the youngest of the accused, being thirty-nine years old. The son of parents in a humble state of life, he had always thanked God that for this reason he could never be tempted to try and set himself above other people. When a student at St Omers his brightness and innocence earned him the name of "the angel," and later, as a Jesuit and missionary, his eloquent speech and clear musical voice made him known as "the silver trumpet."

He lived at Wolverhampton, where the Catholics were still so numerous that it went by the name of Little Rome, and there for eight years he was the life and soul of this faithful flock. When the persecution set on foot by Titus Oates began, a price of £50 was put upon his head.* As he was too well known to be long hidden, he was persuaded to go to London, whence he could more easily make his way abroad, and there wait for better days. Count Walmsteyn, the German ambassador, received him on the way and disguised him as a coachman; but he was betrayed for the price set upon his life, and apprehended in the stables of the German embassy.

On January 23, 1679, being brought before the Privy Council, he defended his cause and that of his brethren with a fearless and persuasive eloquence that greatly impressed his hearers. The silver trumpet had lost nothing of its sweetness and strength, but the council, weakly yielding to the public frenzy, none the less sent him to prison at the Gatehouse, charged with plotting against the life of the king.



V

Trial of the five Jesuits begins—Protestation of Fathers Whitbread and Caldwell—String of accusations—Dugdale comes to uphold Oates—Contradictions of Bedloe—The accused point out the absurdities in the evidence—Partiality of the judges—The Catholic students of St Omers give evidence in favour of the Jesuits—Their clear statements and fearless bearing make a good impression on the public.

SUCH were the five prisoners who, on June 13, 1679, appeared before the tribunal presided over by Sir William Scroggs.

* Public Record Office. *Records*, v, 455.

Fathers Whitbread and Caldwell, although resigned to death, were careful of the honour of their order. At the opening of the proceedings they remarked to the judges that they had already appeared before the same tribunal, but that no proof of guilt having been found against them they were entitled to an acquittal, pure and simple. Instead of this they had been remanded to prison and treated as convicts. No attention was paid to this protest ; the judges proceeded to business, and the two religious, understanding therefrom that their death was resolved upon, said no more.

Then commenced the long series of accusations. Oates affirmed (1) that the provincial had predicted an insurrection in Ireland ; (2) that on April 24, 1678, he had held an assembly of the religious of his order to conspire for the king's death ; (3) that he had offered Sir George Wakeman, the queen's physician, a sum of 60,000 crowns if he would poison the king, and that the proposal had been agreed to by Wakeman ; (4) that Fathers Caldwell and Barrow on August 21, 1678, had sent a sum of 300 crowns to four assassins charged to murder the king at Windsor ; (5) that the Benedictines were the accomplices of the Jesuits in these criminal intrigues.

After Oates came Stephen Dugdale, an apostate, formerly in the service of Lord Aston, a Catholic nobleman. He corroborated Oates' statements, and added that Father Gavan had promised him that he should be canonized if he assassinated Charles II. The third witness, Bedloe, as notorious for his vicious life as were his two associates, added new details to these fantastic declarations. At Father Ireland's

trial Bedloe had affirmed on his oath that he scarcely knew Fathers Whitbread and Caldwell; on this occasion, however, he swore that he knew them intimately. He added that he saw the provincial send four assassins to Windsor, and also that he saw Father Barrow count the gold pieces which were to reward the regicides.

In their defence the accused pointed out the evident falsehoods of their accusers and the flagrant contradictions in Bedloe's evidence at the former trial of the provincial against his present statements; in the same way they showed that the depositions of Oates abounded in falsehood and absurdity. It was especially important for the fathers to prove that Titus Oates was absent from London on April 24, 1678, the day when he pretended to have assisted at a consult of the Jesuits for plotting the king's death. It was notorious that at that date Oates was residing at the college of St Omers. Sixteen youths, pupils of the college, were therefore sent for, and these witnesses attested that on April 24, 1678, they had dined at St Omers in company with the accuser, who during six months had not spent twenty-four hours away from the college. In the same way several people, with whom Oates pretended that he had at that time crossed over from France to England, absolutely denied the fellow's affirmations.

In presence of this evidence the judges, embarrassed in regard to their protégé, sought a way out of their difficulty by declaring that between two conflicting testimonies it was preferable to believe that of men professing the Protestant religion, as did the accusers, than the word of Papists, who had probably

obtained dispensations permitting them to lie. Thus "the voice of reason and innocence was stifled by passion and prejudice." *

Nevertheless, the clear and emphatic defence of the accused produced a certain effect upon the spectators at the trial, and this favourable impression was confirmed by the witnesses brought from St Omers. These youths, some of whom were mere boys, belonged to the old Catholic families of the kingdom. In the hard school of persecution they had learnt the lessons of prudence and of courage. Suddenly transported from the stillness and calm of the ancient Flemish city into these hostile surroundings, in the face of this unjust tribunal the youthful students of St Omers maintained perfect self-possession. They made their depositions firmly, simply and with a character of unmistakable truth. Their natural distinction and their boyish frankness, allied as it was to a manly decision and energy, even struck some members of the jury, less blinded by hatred than the rest. The hearts of the accused must have thrilled with paternal joy and pride on recognizing these youths, whose characters they themselves had formed and strengthened for the conflict, come to dispute the lives of their beloved masters with their executioners.†

* Lingard, ix, 217.

† The *State Trials* give the names of eight of these youths, Hiddesley, Parry, Doddington, Gifford, Palmer, Billing, Towneley and Fall. The judge himself said to this last that he had spoken well. *Records*, v, 132.

VI

Titus Oates takes alarm at this favourable impression—Brings a reinforcement of false witnesses—The accused, though resigned to death, defend themselves with skill and courage—Address of Father Gavan—Interrupted by Scroggs—He resumes the debates—Scroggs abuses the prisoners—The five fathers are declared guilty—Savage delight of the mob—Fortitude of the accused.

TITUS OATES was alarmed at the signs of sympathy called forth by the depositions of the students of St Omers, and, in order to destroy it, hastened to obtain a reinforcement of false witnesses. A Protestant minister, named Walker, affirmed that in the months of March and April he had seen in London a person who might probably have been Titus Oates. A maid and two men-servants made a similar statement. A half-crazy priest, of the name of Clay, deposed that in April, 1678, he met Oates at the house of Lord Charles Howard; but on the following day this nobleman came in person and attested that it was in 1679, and not 1678, that this meeting occurred, and gave precise details in proof of his statement which Oates dared not contradict.

The vague and confused evidence of these witnesses must, in the eyes of an impartial jury, have appeared worthless in comparison with the clear, consistent and unhesitating depositions of the youths who, at the date when Oates pretended that he was in London, were living under the same roof with him at St Omers, seeing him several times daily and noticing his rude, eccentric behaviour.

The attitude of the accused was in every way

admirable. With the resignation of religious who were willing to die they combined a legitimate care of their honour and of their loyalty as English subjects, defending themselves with ease and firmness, and pointing out the numerous flaws and contradictions in the statements of their accusers. Thus they reminded the jury that when first confronted with the Fathers Barrow, Turner and Gavan, Oates did not know them, although he pretended to have had frequent intercourse with them. Also transactions which, according to Oates' story, took place in Belgium, according to Bedloe took place in England. It fell to the lot of Father Gavan, the youngest of the five Jesuits, to sum up their defence. He did it with so much ability and undaunted eloquence that Sir William Scroggs, alarmed at the effect he was producing, roughly interrupted him. The father answered that he was pleading for his faith and his honour, treasures dearer to him than life, and entreated the jury to have patience and hear him to the end. Scroggs, infuriated, exclaimed that there was no longer room in England for a single Papist. "If only there is room for us in heaven," said the prisoner, "I shall be happy."*

In order to efface the impression made on the public by the ringing words of the silver-voiced Jesuit, Scroggs began to ridicule the witnesses from St Omers. "How could any one take seriously the affirmations of youths whose masters taught them that lying was allowable when the end justified the means?" He then had some fresh witnesses brought in: a Protestant minister, an apostate priest, two

* *Records*, v, 135.

women of evil lives, who attested that they had seen Titus Oates or some one of the same name in London, in May, 1678, and formally contradicted the Catholic students. Then Scroggs addressed the jury, and his summing up of the case, which is still in existence in the State Paper Reports, is not the discourse of a judge whose care, as well as his duty, is to administer impartial justice, but rather the tirade of a bitter and unscrupulous enemy, heaping up abuse, reviling and evil insinuations against the prisoners who have been brought before his tribunal and whose condemnation was determined upon beforehand.

After half an hour's deliberation the jury returned a verdict of guilty ; but, as it was by that time eight o'clock in the evening, the official proclamation of the sentence was deferred till the morrow.

A disgraceful scene followed. The mob, worked up to fury by the calumnious fables industriously propagated against the prisoners, surrounded them as they were being taken back to prison and, with savage yells and every sort of insult, clamoured for their death. But throughout this indescribable tumult, the last scene in that long and trying day, the calm equanimity of the five fathers never failed them for an instant. It was but a portion of the contents of that cup of suffering shewn to the provincial in prophetic vision.

Another Jesuit, Father Blundell,* who, in disguise, was present at the trial, tells us that the prisoners

* Richard Nicholas Blundell, belonging to an ancient Catholic family still represented in England, renounced his inheritance as eldest son to enter the Society of Jesus. After attending the trial of the five Jesuits he sent an account of it to Catherine Holt, an English religious at Cambrai. This letter is preserved in the public archives at Brussels. Father Blundell died at St Omers in 1680. *Records*, v, 44.

bore tranquilly and unmoved the insults showered upon them, showing a truly religious and apostolic spirit.



VII

Trial of Richard Langhorne—His captivity—He is interviewed by Shaftesbury—His firmness where his conscience is concerned—He is treated with outrageous injustice—Bravely disputes his life with his enemies—Condemned to death at the same time as the Jesuits, he shows the same calmness in facing the frenzy of the people.

NEXT day a fresh group of prisoners appeared at the bar. Richard Langhorne, a celebrated lawyer and a friend of Father Whitbread; Sir George Wakeman, physician to the king and queen, and three Benedictines, Fathers Foster, Hesketh and Marsh. As the trial of Langhorne was to be first proceeded with, that of the Benedictines was postponed, and this delay probably saved their lives.

Langhorne was a distinguished man, religious and upright, and, like Sir George Wakeman, an exemplary Catholic.* His friendship with the Jesuits suggested to Oates the thought of involving him in the pretended plot. His case† presented an instance of extraordinary hardship. Arrested October 7, 1678, he was thrown into prison without any previous examination before a magistrate, kept in close confinement and complete ignorance of passing events for eight months, and on June 13, 1679, without the possibility of preparing his defence, obtaining the aid of counsel, or collecting memoranda for his justification, was brought to trial. The charge brought against him was that he

* Challoner, ii, 205.

† Lingard, ix, 217.

had conspired with the Jesuits for the king's death, and that he had had in his hands a document apportioning among the Catholic peers all the great offices of the kingdom.

During his long months of solitude in the dungeons of Newgate, Shaftesbury repeatedly promised him his life if he would affirm that the Jesuits had plotted the death of the king. Langhorne replied that he could not affirm the existence of a plot which he knew to be a pure invention. He was then required to give an account of the money possessed by the Jesuits as he was known to administer their affairs. This not being a matter affecting his conscience, and also, we are told by Jesuit authors, probably in agreement with Father Whitbread, he transmitted to the king the statement demanded. But Shaftesbury quickly informed him that this concession was not sufficient, and that, if he wished to save his head, he must attest the existence of a Jesuit conspiracy. Again Langhorne declared that he could not affirm that to be true which he knew to be false: his destruction was therefore resolved upon.

In spite of all the difficulties of his position, the ill-will of the judge, the isolation in which he had been kept and the deprivation of all means of defence, Richard Langhorne faced his enemies with undaunted courage. Not only was the aid of counsel denied him or time to prepare his defence, but the few witnesses he was allowed to send for were hissed, insulted and beaten by the crowd, some being in this way driven out of court. Left to his own resources, the prisoner defended himself with great ability against the falsehoods of his accusers; but in vain: his proofs

of the inconsistencies in their statements were overruled or ignored; the jury returned a verdict of guilty, and he was sentenced to death.

The injustice of his treatment must have been singularly great, for Sir William Scroggs, devoid as he was of conscience or pity, was, later in his career, tormented with remorse in regard to Langhorne, and acknowledged that he had been wrongfully condemned.*

At the end of the trial the five religious condemned on the previous day were brought in and placed side by side with him who had been their friend and adviser and was now their brother in arms. The atrocious sentence received during two hundred years by so many of our noble confessors was then pronounced. The prisoners were "to be drawn to the place of execution and there hanged, cut down alive, dismembered, disembowelled and quartered."

Then, with clapping of hands, there arose in the hall as it were the yell of wild beasts secure of their prey.

As for the prisoners, "they received their sentence," says Father Blundell, who was present, "with great courage, and with a gladness that showed itself in their faces, returned thanks to God that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. Father Gavan, we are told, showed incredible happiness at the thought of martyrdom.†

* Lingard, ix, 218. † *Records*, v, 456.

CHAPTER V

MORE EXECUTIONS

I

Petition of the five Jesuits to the king—Two of them are visited by Shaftesbury—Their spirit of joyful resignation—Catholics allowed to visit them.

BEING remanded to prison, the condemned, who had hitherto been kept in close and solitary confinement, were allowed to receive the visits of a few Catholics, who were greatly consoled and edified by their example.

At the same time, firm in their determination of doing all that lay in their power to clear their order from the false accusation of complicity in any plot or treasonable practices, the five Jesuit fathers addressed a petition to the king,* the text of which is still in existence.

In it they declare, “by the passion and death of our Blessed Saviour,” that the crime of which they are accused never came into their thoughts, and pray the king to condemn them to banishment rather than to the death of traitors which they have done nothing to deserve, having never failed in their duty as loyal subjects. Lastly, they assure his majesty that what-

* A copy of this petition is preserved at Stonyhurst, and another is in the archives at Brussels,

ever may befall them, they will ever, with one heart and mind, pray for his prosperity, spiritual and temporal.

No notice was taken of this petition, and the prisoners, having done what was needful to assert their claim to their country's justice and to affirm their unchanging loyalty, now put aside every care but that of preparation for death.

A last assault was, however, in store for two among them. We learn from a contemporary account and on the testimony of Bishop Challoner* that, on June 29, the eve of their execution, Shaftesbury, who was the soul of the plot of which Oates was the instrument, visited Fathers Turner and Gavan in their cells. He held in his hand a pardon, which, he said, the king offered the prisoners if they would consent to declare their knowledge of the existence of a plot. The religious received this proposal with indignation. Father Gavan explained that he had no intention of killing his soul to save his body, and that to acknowledge the existence of a plot against the king's life would be to acknowledge as true that which he knew to be an invention and a lie.

Moreover, Father Gavan, being of an expansive and joyous disposition, openly manifested his happiness in dying for God. On the day of his execution he shaved and dressed carefully, in order, as he said, to prepare more fittingly for his sacred nuptials. Those of the faithful who were admitted to visit the martyrs brought away from Newgate a vivid sense of strength and sweetness which helped them also to

* ii, 199.

bear without weakness or murmuring the weight of persecution then pressing so heavily upon the Catholics of England.



II

Tyburn in the seventeenth century, and now—The road by which the condemned were taken—Bearing of the five fathers—Divers witnesses—The chaplain of Newgate tries to convert them—Extraordinary reaction of feeling in the crowd.

IN the seventeenth century, as in the days of Elizabeth, public executions usually took place at Tyburn, then outside London. This plot of ground, which is so sacred in the eyes of Catholics, and now forms a portion of the wealthy and aristocratic West End, was, two centuries ago, surrounded by fields and woods. Tyburn Gate then stood between Hyde Park and the present Edgeware Road, and a few paces from this gate rose the well-known triple tree, called by our old historians “the Calvary of England.”

Tyburn is two miles distant from the prison of Newgate in the heart of the city, and as those about to suffer were dragged on their hurdles down Holborn Hill and along the road which now is Oxford Street their heads were sometimes grievously wounded by the rugged pavement.

We have abundant testimony from ocular witnesses, both friends and adversaries, as to the bearing of the five religious who on this memorable day, Friday, June 30, were drawn through the dust to martyrdom. Amongst many others we have the detailed report of Samuel Smith, the Protestant chaplain of Newgate, who, impelled by a zeal that

was evidently sincere, wished to induce the Jesuits to abjure the errors of popery.

The fathers having declined to admit him into their cells, he determined to lie in wait for them as they passed out to be laid upon the hurdles. Father Barrow was the first to appear: the chaplain was watching for him at the outer gate, and, profiting by the few moments at his disposal, conjured the father to confess his crime and repent of it. Father Barrow, absorbed in his own thoughts, answered briefly that he knew his duty. Smith managed to retain Father Caldwell a little longer, and addressed to him a discourse which he himself describes as "more pathetic than the other." The father being in no way touched by it and its ignorant denunciations, answered that he and his brethren were reasonable men and determined as to their line of conduct. The chaplain then began a lengthy discourse which must have singularly tried the prisoner's patience, comparing the enlightened learning of the Protestant doctors with the ignorance in which, he said, the Jesuits purposely left their novices, and, in conclusion, reproaching them with misunderstanding the feelings of the law of nature which even savages knew how to respect. Smith adds with apparent surprise that his discourse did not please the prisoner. As for the other three religious, he was not able to accost them before they were stretched on the hurdles, when the noise of the crowd was so great that he had much trouble to make himself heard.*

The crowd was in fact extraordinarily large and, for the most part, hostile to the victims; a few

* *Account of the Behaviour of the Five Jesuits*, quoted in Cobbett. *State Trials*, vii, 586; *Records*, v, 244.

Catholics were however present, and it was to some of these, who were full of sadness, that Father Gavan said with a smile, "What does the manner of our death matter if only we get safe to heaven ?"*

On the first hurdle were laid the provincial and Father Barrow, rector of the London district; on the second, Fathers Turner and Gavan; on the third, Father Caldwell, procurator of the college of St Omers. Richard Langhorne, condemned at the same time as the Jesuits, was executed a few days afterwards.

As the dismal procession passed along the streets of London under the hot June sun, the grave and serene countenances of the condemned much impressed the thronging multitude. The wife of an Anglican minister on seeing them dragged by burst into tears, exclaiming, "No, I never will believe that these men, so humble and so calm, can be guilty of high treason!" And the same conviction was expressed in a thousand various forms by those who, having come to insult the victims, were touched with sympathy and admiration.



III

Testimony of one who was present—Discourse of the provincial—And of the other fathers—Eloquence of Father Gavan—Attention of the people.

MINGLING with the crowd that surged around the gibbet at Tyburn was Father Alexander Keynes,† a

* *Records*, v, 57.

† Alexander Keynes belonged to an ancient family which gave seven members to the Society of Jesus. He was born in 1641 and died in 1712. The narrative left by him of the execution of his

Jesuit, who, in disguise, had followed his brethren step by step from Newgate to the gallows' foot, where he stood a watchful witness of all that was taking place.

After describing the calmness and recollection of the martyrs on their painful journey, he shows them to us standing in the cart, having already the rope round their necks, the other end of each rope being fastened round the cross-bar of the gibbet. They affectionately embraced one another and seemed to be speaking in a low voice; probably they were giving each other the last absolution.

Then Father Whitbread, who maintained to the end his rank of provincial, requested the sheriff's permission to speak to the people. He was answered by a refusal; but the crowd, at first so hostile, was moved by the serenity with which these men were going to a dreadful death, and from a thousand voices a shout arose, "We wish to hear them! Let each of them speak to us!"

Before this determined expression of the popular will the sheriff gave way. The provincial was the first to speak. While accepting with joy and thankfulness death endured for the Catholic faith, he energetically repelled, for himself and his brethren, the charge of treason. "In the presence of God" he protested that he was innocent as a new-born babe of the crime he was accused of: he disavowed the teaching, falsely attributed to his order by its adversaries, that "lying is allowable in the service of religion"; he pardoned his enemies, particularly the false wit-

brethren is now in the archives of Brussels (*Carton, S.J.*), with a quantity of other documents seized in the Jesuit houses in the Netherlands at the end of the eighteenth century.

nesses who were the immediate cause of his death; and prayed for the king: "I beg of God to bless him in this world and in the next: this has been my daily prayer for him: this is all the harm that I have ever done him." He next affirmed that never, under any pretext, is it allowable to plot the monarch's death, and that the Catholics ought to "defend and protect with all their might the sacred person of the king, and obey him."

Having thus plainly defined the duty of the faithful in regard to this king whose cowardice was costing him his life, the provincial commended his soul to his Redeemer, "for," he said, "I hope for my salvation through His merits and by His passion."*

The people who, eight days previously, had shouted their applause on hearing this Jesuit sentenced to death, were now many of them in tears as they listened to his dying words. Father Barrow spoke in the same sense as his superior; the sheriff having interrupted him with questions about the murder of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, he replied with dignity, and ended by praying for the king and for his royal consort, "the best of queens."†

Father Caldwell was also interrupted by the sheriff, when he also affirmed his ignorance of the pretended plot. "I am a man on the point of death," he answered warmly, "and you think I would damn my soul by perjury?" Like his brethren he went on to pray for the king, to forgive his accusers, and to

* The original of this discourse, "My Discourse at the place of my Execution," in Father Whitbread's own handwriting, is preserved at Oscott. *Records*, v, 240.

† *Records*, v, 243.

denounce the evil and dangerous doctrines falsely charged upon Catholics, adding, “I am very willing and ready to suffer this death. I pray God pardon me my sins, and save my soul !”*

Father Turner spoke at greater length, refuting one by one the diverse accusations brought by Titus Oates, and recalling the fact that, strong in his own innocence, he had presented himself of his own accord before the king’s Privy Council. Then he prayed : “O sweet Jesus, my dear Saviour and Redeemer. . . . now, at the hour of my death, with firm faith and steadfast hope I joyfully throw myself into the arms of Thy mercy, O Thou whose arms were stretched out upon the cross for my salvation. Sweet Jesus, receive my spirit !”†

Of the five martyrs Father Gavan spoke the longest. Standing erect in the cart, with the rope round his neck and his face radiant, there was something almost superhuman in the aspect of him who had been known among his brethren as the angel. He solemnly declared their innocence and his own. “Standing between time and eternity, by all that is sacred in heaven and earth,” he affirmed that neither the members of his order nor Catholics in general profess the subversive doctrines attributed to them by the ignorance or hatred of their adversaries. He forgave his enemies ; and then, to use his own expression, having fulfilled his duty to himself, his order, his neighbour and the whole world, he turned with ardent faith to God, who was about to become his “ exceeding great reward.” “ I am glad to suffer death, O my dearest Jesus, for the love of Thee,

* *Records*, p. 246. † *Ibid.* v, 865.

who, Thyself, didst suffer a shameful death for love of me! ”*

Contemporary narratives tell us that the people listened in breathless silence, and that many wept.

The martyrs were then allowed half an hour of preparation. Father Keynes relates that they spent this time in prayer “with extraordinary serenity, devotion and piety.”† He owns that he reached Tyburn troubled, sorrowful and anxious, but the sight of his brethren dispelled all sadness, and he could have wished to join himself to them.

A respectful silence was observed by the multitude while, with clasped hands and downcast eyes, the prisoners prayed; “Nor did I hear a hostile remark,” says Father Keynes, “in all that immense concourse of people.”



IV

An offer of pardon to the martyrs if they will own to certain things--
Their refusal—Their execution—Effect on the people.

THIS solemn silence was broken by the approach of a horse galloping at full speed. The rider, holding up a paper in his hands, shouted as he rode, “A pardon! a pardon!” and then handed the document to the sheriff.

It was in fact a pardon granted by Charles II to the condemned on condition that they would acknowledge the existence of a plot against the king and that they would also name its authors.

The religious, thus interrupted in their devotions, thanked the king, but their answer was the same as

* *Records*, v, 458. † *Ibid.* 968.

before. Convinced that the plot was an invention, they had no revelations to make.

Upon this the preparations for the execution began at once. A cap was drawn over the faces of the victims ; then, the cart being suddenly dragged away, they were left hanging from the gallows. Contrary to the letter of the law, they were allowed to remain thus for half an hour, and were consequently dead when the executioner cut them down and proceeded to the subsequent butchery. The head of each one was cut off and the heart torn out ; then the mutilated body was divided into four parts, and the heart and intestines burnt at the foot of the gibbet.

As an act of exceptional favour the king authorized the Catholics to take possession of the precious remains of these five martyrs, which were by them interred in the churchyard of St Giles-in-the-Fields at Holborn.

Contemporary writers are unanimous in noting the remarkable change in public opinion which took place on the day of this five-fold execution. So noticeable was it that the government took alarm at the favourable impression produced, and for which it was unprepared ; and, in order to neutralize it, printed copies of the last discourses of the five fathers with a commentary injurious to their memory. The people, still dominated by the emotion that had so affected them, read the discourses eagerly, but paid no attention to the official comments.

V

The Catholics possess themselves of the relics of the victims—Favours attributed to their intercession—Pope Innocent XI professes a great devotion for them—Their portraits are hung on the walls of the queen's palace—Charles II and the martyrs.

IF the death of the five confessors produced so deep an impression even on their enemies, we may imagine with what avidity the English Catholics treasured the smallest memorials of their martyrs. Many of the faithful succeeded in dipping their handkerchiefs or pieces of linen in the blood of the victims, and writings of the time make mention of numerous cures wrought by these relics.* An eminent Jesuit also, Father Francis Waldegrave, was cured of a violent fever by the intercession of his brethren,† and in the archives of Stonyhurst College may be found many curious particulars on the same subject. These particulars are contained in a very rare book, published in 1694, less than twenty years after the execution, having for its title, *Effigies octo Patrum Societatis Jesus in Anglia pro fide Catholica, anno 1679 occisorum*. It has portraits of the martyrs, an account of miracles attributed to their intercession, and gives the names and addresses of sixty of the persons thus cured. This volume was brought from the college of the Jesuits at Ingoldstadt, and consists for the most part of the correspondence of Thomas Eberson, an English Jesuit residing at Ingoldstadt, with two

* *Records*, v, 85.

† *Ibid.*, v, 386.

eminent members of the English province, Fathers de Sabran * and Richard Plowden.

Pope Innocent XI was well aware of the marks of veneration freely shown to these confessors for the faith. There is an important document preserved in the archives of the Society at Rome, attesting that the sovereign pontiff called these fathers, *martyrs*, *saints* and *blessed*, declaring them to have been put to death out of hatred to the faith.† A letter from the father general, Charles de Noyelles,‡ to Father Warner,§ who succeeded Father Whitbread as provincial of England, speaks in 1679 of the great devotion of Innocent XI for the martyred religious. He not only caused a notice of their execution to appear in the Roman gazette, but also persisted in supplementing it with an account of the miracles attributed to their intercession, and this notwithstanding the objections respectfully urged by the father general, who considered it advisable before publishing these statements to wait for fuller verification of them than was at once obtainable.||

It was not only in the colleges of the Society,

* Son of Melchior de Sabran, a former ambassador from France to England. His mother was English. Richard Plowden, of an ancient family faithful to the old religion, was born in 1663, entered the Society in 1679, was rector successively at Liège, St Omers and Rome, then provincial of the English province, and again rector of St Omers. He died at Watten in Flanders in 1729.

† *Records*, v, 66.

‡ Charles de Noyelles, a Belgian by birth, general of the Society of Jesus from 1682 to 1686.

§ John Warner, born 1628, entered the Society in 1662. Under James II he became confessor to the king, whom he accompanied to St Germains, and died there in 1692.

|| *Records*, v, 66,

and at Rome, the centre of the Christian world, or in secret in the homes of the persecuted English Catholics, that the Jesuit martyrs were venerated, but also in the royal palace of Somerset House itself, the residence of Catherine of Braganza.

This unfortunate queen gave proof of a courage truly royal in face of the machinations of Shaftesbury and his party. She followed with poignant interest the proceedings against their victims, on whose behalf she made a strenuous effort, by appealing to the king to save them, knowing them to be innocent. To her entreaties Charles answered that he was, equally with herself, convinced of the loyalty of the accused, and would let his hand be cut off rather than sign their death-warrant. Then, circumvented and over-ruled by the representation of his ministry, chiefly by Shaftesbury, he soon wearied of resistance, and signed the doom of men of whose innocence he had no doubt. The day after he had done this the queen noticed that his right hand was swollen and inflamed. It became so much worse, causing him great torture for many days and nights, that the physicians were alarmed, and spoke of amputation. Catherine saw in this sudden and strange occurrence a warning from heaven, and ventured to say so to her husband.

Shortly afterwards she obtained portraits of the martyred Jesuits and hung them up in her boudoir. A person of high rank hinted to her that the sight of them might give offence to his majesty. She therefore herself put the question to him: "Did he wish them removed?" He answered that she need not remove them, since he himself was fully convinced of

the falsehood of the charges against them.* Also, with a strange inconsistency which revealed the incurable and cowardly weakness that was part of his character, Charles never entered the queen's boudoir but that he would turn towards them and kissing their hands would beg their forgiveness in a most humble manner, and, fully acknowledging his fault and their innocence, concluded by saying that they were in a place where they knew of a truth that he had been forced, and that they would therefore pray to God for him to pardon his crime.†

After the execution of the five fathers, among some articles which were taken from them and carried to the king was a relic of the wood of the true cross, which his majesty took, and though the queen begged for it, he would not part with it, saying that he wished to keep it for himself; which he did, for after death (four years later) "nothing else was found in the king's pocket except the holy relic and a manuscript in his own handwriting, proving by the clearest argument the truth of the Roman Catholic faith; which MS.," adds Father Lawrence, "I saw myself, but could not by any means obtain leave to copy it."‡

* *Records*, v, 93.

† *Ibid.*, v, 93.

‡ Letters from His Highness the Grand Duke to the Rev. Father General, Charles de Noyelles, April 3, 1685. *Excerpta P. Glover.* Stonyhurst MSS., ii, 101. Quoted in *Records*, v, 93.

VI

Langhorne executed fifteen days later—His piety—Addresses the people—His last words, and death.

RICHARD LANGHORNE, condemned at the same time as the five Jesuits, had not the consolation of dying with them, his execution being delayed for fifteen days. Shaftesbury knew that the story of the plot rested solely on the evidence of disreputable individuals, and that its importance would be greatly increased in the public opinion if any word could be extorted from a man so respected as Langhorne which might appear to corroborate the depositions of Oates and his accomplices. This he spared no pains to obtain, but all his manœuvres were unavailing. The prisoner invariably answered that the pretended conspiracy of the Papists was nothing but an invention of their enemies, and that as for himself he refused to save his life by telling a lie.

Then, turning his thoughts from earth to fix them on the things of heaven, he spent his solitary days in prayer and meditation until July 14, 1679, which was for him the dawn of eternity. Bound on his hurdle, he calmly followed along the rugged road by which his friends had travelled two weeks before. On reaching Tyburn he put into the sheriff's hands a copy of the discourse he had wished to address to the people, and his request that it might be printed after his death was not refused. In this discourse, after affirming his attachment to the king and his innocence of any disloyal proceeding, he plainly declared it to be

the duty of every faithful subject who should discover a plot against his sovereign to denounce it without delay to the lawful authorities. In the following passages dealing with lying and equivocation we find the sense if not the exact words of the declarations of the Jesuit fathers on those points, and the same carefulness to defend the integrity of the Catholic teaching. He next claims the honour of dying for the holy, Catholic and apostolic Church of Christ, and reveals the dishonourable proposals made to him by Shaftesbury. "I was not only offered a pardon, but employment and riches if I would give up my religion, own myself guilty of the crime laid to my charge and accuse others of the same. I thank God for giving me grace rather to choose death." He prayed for the king, for Oates and Bedloe, to whom he wished a true repentance, for his country, that his blood might not be visited upon it; adding, "Unite all men to Thy Church, O my God, by true faith, hope and charity. I humbly pray to Thee, my Jesus, for those who have shown me kindness and compassion, that Thou wouldest reward them with blessings for time and for eternity."

When the rope was being put round his neck, he kissed it. The executioner, much moved, begged his forgiveness. "Most willingly I forgive you," he said, and then silently resumed his prayers. A friendly voice from the crowd cried out, "God be merciful to your soul!" to which he answered, "May the God of heaven reward your charity!" Then, making the sign of the cross, he said, "Blessed Jesus, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Receive me into paradise. Jesus, I am ready, tarry not." The cart was quickly

drawn away, and he was allowed to hang a considerable time, so that, when cut down, his happy soul was already safe with God.

The death of Richard Langhorne reveals the high degree of moral elevation to which persecution had raised our English Catholics of the seventeenth century. An honest and upright man suddenly snatched from the ordinary occupations of a busy life is found to be, beneath the exterior of a clever lawyer and a good citizen, also a hero and a saint. He accepts death simply and courageously, and amid all his trials gives proof of a spirit of detachment as perfect as, but more surprising than, that shown by the holy religious whose whole lives had been a preparation for martyrdom.



VII

Another group of Catholics tried, but acquitted—The religious are kept in prison—Oates loses credit—The people begin to be weary of executions—Shaftesbury adroitly revives the popular fanaticism which was gradually dying out.

FOUR days only after the execution of Langhorne another group of Catholics appeared at the bar, impeached for high treason. They were Sir George Wakeman, physician to the king and queen, three Benedictine fathers and a brother of the same order of the name of Romney. We have already had a glimpse of Father James Corker, who was now brought again before the tribunal, together with two other zealous missionaries, Fathers Wall and Hesketh. During their imprisonment of more than eight months they had been visited in their cells by the Jesuit Father Blundell. In his narrative he says that he

was much edified at seeing them so prompt "in conforming themselves to the holy will of God, who was pleased to dispose of them as victims and holocausts to Himself. . . . Awaiting their happy hour with joyful and courageous hearts spending the whole of their brief interval of life in works of piety and charity, ever ready for all the duties of their calling towards those Catholics to whom permission had been given to frequent the prison, and always exhibiting cheerfulness and greatness of soul."*

Like the prisoners who had preceded them at the bar, these also felt it their duty to defend themselves to the best of their ability, and they did so with spirit and courage. The jury was evidently shaken by the impression produced at the time of the last executions, and showed less tenderness towards Oates, who, for the first time, lost countenance. The accused profited by these favourable circumstances, and showed as much energy in defending their honour and life as they had shown readiness to sacrifice both if such were the will of God. Sir George Wakeman, with manly dignity, reminded his judges of the services rendered by himself and others of his family to the king whom he was accused of wishing to poison. The Benedictines, in their turn, made a clear and fearless defence, and vindicated the teaching of the Church from the false aspersions of her enemies.

In spite of the pressure exerted by Shaftesbury and of the efforts made by Oates and his accomplices the jury this time yielded to evidence, and acquitted the accused.

* *Records*, v, 57.

Sir George Wakeman was set at liberty, and, to avoid fresh vexations, went abroad. The Benedictine lay-brother, Romney, was also released, but the three monks were remanded to Newgate. The government, unwilling to lose its prey, summoned them to appear before another tribunal. They were now accused, not of conspiring against the king, but simply of being Catholic priests, and as such, by the law of Elizabeth, guilty of treason.* For this fact they were condemned to death; then their sentence was commuted, and they remained in prison until the accession of James II.

Lingard says that the acquittal of this group of Catholics greatly embarrassed the authors of the plot, and his statement is confirmed by Echard. The credulity of the people was on the wane; Oates was evidently losing his prestige, and would have been completely discredited had not Shaftesbury, who was now become president of the council, resolved to stir up afresh the expiring embers of popular fanaticism—a resolution he acted upon with a truly diabolical skill. He had sworn to crush the Papists, and with them the Duke of York, the heir to the crown, in order to build on the ruins of the Catholic party his own fortune and political power. All means were good for this end, and we shall see that he found within Parliament itself the aid he required.

* In 1559 Elizabeth decreed that all her subjects who acknowledged the papal supremacy were guilty of high treason. In 1571 the penalty of death was pronounced against any person giving or receiving absolution.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERSECUTION IN THE SHIRES

I

The impression produced by the acquittal of the last accused affects London—In the shires the persecution rages—Zeal of the missionaries—Their letters—Their joy.

THE acquittal of Sir George Wakeman and his companions, as we have said, seemed to make a marked impression on public opinion; but this impression scarcely extended beyond London, where the words and bearing of the recent martyrs had already favourably disposed the crowds who witnessed their deaths.

In the country parts nothing was known of this change of feeling; there the persecution against priests and lay-recusants raged with a violence that recalled the worst days under Elizabeth. “It seemed as if there existed a design of wholly extirpating the Catholic religion. Rewards were offered by proclamation of £10 for the discovery of any Papist within any one of the royal residences, of £50 for the discovery of money or lands belonging to any priest, chapel, college or religious order the judges were to reward at their discretion the prosecutors of popish recusants out of the forfeitures of the sufferers, and lists of the Catholics in each

county were delivered to the commissioners with orders to tender to all such the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. . . . The time of the judges during the circuit was chiefly employed in the prosecution of Catholic priests or recusants. The latter paid the fine of £20 per month for absence from church or forfeited two thirds of his estate to the king; of the former twenty-four received (at this time) sentence of death for the exercise of their functions.”*

The Annual Letters, addressed by the English Jesuits to their superiors at Rome, show us that these rigorous measures, far from abating the zeal of the missionaries, seemed on the contrary to stimulate it. “In this year” (1680), we read, “the fathers in the continental colleges petitioned their superiors to be employed on the English mission, so that it became necessary to restrain them by holy obedience, lest they should rush into certain danger and almost certain death.” (Nevertheless) “by God’s special providence, many of our fathers met together in safety, in spite of the most stringent measures adopted by the governors of the ports . . . and the enormous rewards offered for the apprehension of a single Jesuit. . . . The Protestants took occasion from this meeting to say, ‘The Jesuits fear neither danger nor death; hang as many of them as you will, others are ready to take their place.’”†

And indeed the narrations sent by the English missionaries to the seminaries and religious houses abroad were of a nature to enkindle the ardour of young and generous hearts. They are impregnated with so joyous a spirit of self-sacrifice, so lofty and

* Lingard, ix, 219, 220.

† *Records*, v, 82.

unconscious a courage, and at the same time such true simplicity that, at two centuries of distance, we feel in reading them some thrill of the deep emotion stirred by their perusal in the contemporaries of our martyrs.



II

Father Evans—His cheerfulness—Execution delayed—Self-possession—Adieux—John Lloyd—Execution of the two priests—Their deportment and last words.

THIS characteristic of joyous simplicity is especially marked in the Welsh priests who suffered.

On December 3, 1678, Father Philip Evans, a Jesuit, who had for ten years ministered to the spiritual needs of his widely-scattered flock, was arrested in the house of Christopher Turberville de Skere, a Catholic gentleman, taken to Cardiff gaol, and kept for three weeks in solitary confinement in an underground cell ; after which his imprisonment was shared by John Lloyd, a secular priest. In May, 1679, the two prisoners appeared at the spring assizes and received sentence of death. On returning to prison Father Evans was put into chains, which he kissed many times, giving thanks to God for the honour of wearing the insignia of Jesus Christ. He then asked for a harp, and accompanied himself while he sang hymns and psalms of thanksgiving, to the great consolation and encouragement of the many other Catholic prisoners who were confessors for their faith.

Before proceeding to the execution of the two priests the authorities of Cardiff thought it incumbent upon them to refer to the council in London. The answer was so long in arriving that the keepers of the

prison, relaxing their severity, allowed Father Evans freely to receive his friends, and even unattended to visit Catholics in the town, well knowing that one so happy to die would have no wish to take advantage of this permission to make his escape.

When the order suddenly came to proceed to the execution of the two priests on the very next day, the father was playing a game of draughts with a friend. The gaoler hastened to warn him and bring him back to prison. "What hurry is there?" he quietly replied; "let me first play out my game." This he did, and then returned to prison, where he was again put in irons.

Next day, July 22, the feast of St Mary Magdalene, the under-sheriff came to the cell, attended by a smith, to remove the shackles. These had been so firmly rivetted that the man was above an hour taking off those of Father Evans alone, causing him an exquisite torture which he bore without the least sign of impatience. The man, finding himself unable to remove them and overcome by compassion, threw down his tools, nor could the threats of the official or the father's earnest request induce him to finish the work. The chains being at last removed, the martyrs were brought out, placed in a cart and their arms pinioned. All the way they prayed and said the Divine Office together, until on arriving, they secretly confessed and absolved one another, and descending from the cart embraced and kissed the gallows, saluting it in the words of St Andrew, *Salve bona Crux!* and remained some time in silent prayer. On the sheriff saying that Mr Evans was to die first the father warmly embraced his companion and then

briefly addressed the assembled people. "I need not tell you," he said, "why we are brought here to suffer; our sentence is witness that it is not for conspiracy or any other crime, but only for being priests, and, therefore, for religion and conscience' sake. . . . I would not exchange the happiness of dying for this cause for all the crowns in the world. If I have any enemies (which I do not know that I ever had in my life), I heartily forgive them, and if I have offended them, I ask their forgiveness. I pray God bless and prosper the king. I beg the prayers of all Catholics here present."

After mounting the ladder he spoke again, adding, "I earnestly pray God to bless all my benefactors, and give thanks especially to you, Mr Sheriff, for your humane conduct to me. . . . If any here who see me die thus willingly for my religion have any good thought upon it, I shall be happy." Then, with a most tender expression of feeling, he said, "Mr Lloyd, do what you promised"; and looking up to heaven he said with great fervour, "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendabo spiritum meum.*"

When he should have been turned off the ladder, this, being too short, turned with him, but was removed by one of the sheriff's bailiffs. All present testified that he never looked better or more cheerful than he did then. Thus, in the prime of early manhood, for he was but in the thirty-fourth year of his age, full of life, intelligence and vigour, did Father Evans consummate his fight.

The Rev. John Lloyd, his brother-confessor, stood calmly awaiting his turn to die with as much constancy and cheerfulness as any man could possess,

He was an exemplary priest, silent and somewhat shy. He made a brief address, humbly saying that he was never a good speaker in his life; but those who knew him were struck by the warmth and vivacity with which he declared his faith and his forgiveness of all who had injured him, asking the prayers of all, and in particular of the Catholics present, desiring them to bear their crosses patiently, remembering that "Happy are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Then, striking his breast, he thrice said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," and was turned off the ladder to rejoin his comrade in arms in the peace of paradise and the light of God.



III

David Lewis—Agony and death of a proscribed priest—The sympathy felt for Father Lewis—His execution.

To these two Welsh martyrs must be added a third—Father David Lewis, a Jesuit, who had laboured in South Wales for twenty-eight years. He was almost constantly on foot—by night oftener than by day—in that wild and mountainous region to visit his persecuted flock, his love for whom won him the surname of "the father of the poor." Betrayed by a false brother in 1678, he was arrested and led on horseback to Abergavenny, exposed to the derision of the populace, and afterwards taken to Monmouth. Two months later, in January, 1679, he was removed to Usk to take his trial, the ground being thickly covered with snow. The journey was made on foot, and in

passing through the village of Raglan his escort stopped to warm and refresh themselves at an inn. There a person unknown came and informed the prisoner that Father Andrews, an aged missionary of his order, lay dying in a hut about a mile and a half distant. Not being permitted to go to the dying priest, Father Lewis was only able to send him a message of consolation and his wishes for a happy passage from this troubled world to rest eternal. Three days after he learnt that Father Andrews was dead.

The author of the *Brevis Relatio** commences his short biography of this father by observing that the fathers of the Society, being most eagerly hunted to death in consequence of the proclamation of the Parliament, were compelled by charity to seek out hiding-places lest the sheep of Christ's fold should be left entirely deprived of all spiritual aid. Here they endured the greatest sufferings, being concealed in caves and subterranean vaults and not daring to stir out unless under cover of night. For nearly two months in the winter scarcely a night passed in which Father Andrews was not sought for in the houses of Catholics. From that time no rest was allowed to the aged father, no place could afford him safe shelter. Through fear of the terrible laws even Catholics sometimes denied him hospitality, while he, out of charity, avoided their houses, lest he might involve them in the penalties of confiscation and death for harbouring a Jesuit and a priest. A Protestant relative of his was the most bitter of all his persecutors, and, to escape the snares this man laid for him, the father during

* *Records*, v, 900, 902.

the winter of 1678-9 had been compelled to fly by night from barn to barn, from cave to cave, even from hog-stye to hog-stye, through woods and mountains, sometimes barefoot, under heavy falls of snow and across deep streams. At length, worn out by fatigue and want, he fell ill of fever and died, January 16, 1679, in the seventieth year of his age, having been literally hunted to death.

Father David Lewis was not tried until March 28. He was sentenced to death, but, instead of being at once executed, was sent to London to be questioned in regard to the plot.* Being sent back to Usk, he still remained in gaol for some months, during which time the gaoler, touched by his patience, left him free to exercise his ministry among the Catholic prisoners. The sheriff himself sought pretexts to defer the execution, in hope of a pardon being obtained, which Shaftesbury being informed of, sent peremptory orders for the execution to take place forthwith, and fined the sheriff for neglect and for indulgence to the prisoner.

Accordingly, on August 27, Father Lewis was led forth to the place of execution. He went with great joy of countenance and firmness, and in presence of the surrounding multitude delivered in a clear voice and with great animation a most touching and eloquent address.† In the course of it, commenting on the words, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief, but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed," (1 St Peter, iv, 15,) he said: "These words

* He completely vindicated his innocence before the Privy Council, yet was he not discharged, Shaftesbury requiring him to confess a knowledge of the plot and to implicate the Jesuits in it if he would save his life.

† Given in full in *Records*, v, 925-928.

are a great consolation to me for, wherefore is this my untimely death? Because my religion is the Roman Catholic. In it I have lived above these forty years; in it I now die, and so fixedly die that if all the good things in the world were offered me to renounce it, all should not move me one hair's breadth from my Roman Catholic faith. A priest I am of the order called the Society of Jesus, and I bless God who first called me, and I bless the hour in which I was called both into faith and function. Be pleased now to observe that I was condemned for celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, administering the sacraments of extreme unction, baptism and matrimony, and also for preaching. . . . Know moreover that when I was examined in London last May, a certain nobleman of high rank told me that I must die unless I betrayed the secret of the plot, or else accommodated myself to the reformed religion. To do the first I was unable, being conscious of no plot; to do the last conscience forbade me. Therefore I must die and, upon so good a cause as religion and conscience, I die with alacrity, as far as human frailty permits. . . . Here, methinks, I feel flesh and blood ready to burst into loud cries, 'Tooth for tooth, eye for eye, blood for blood, life for life!' No, exclaims the holy gospel: 'Forgive and you shall be forgiven: love your enemies: pray for those that persecute you.' I profess myself a child of the gospel, and I obey."

The sympathy of the people with Father Lewis showed itself in many ways at the time of the execution. The sheriff, having already been fined for postponing it, would not now wait a day as some begged him to do, although no gallows had been erected,

the carpenters and other workmen having run away and hidden their tools. He therefore took a convict from the gaol, promising to procure his release if he would do the work. A blacksmith was induced by a bribe of twelve crowns to turn hangman, the proper functionary having gone away: but he thus lost all his customers. When the father was hung, a Protestant who was present, convinced of his innocence, stood by him, holding his hand, and preventing the convict-hangman from cutting the rope until he was dead. As for the hangman, the people wanted to stone him. Lastly, by an unusual exception, the quartering was omitted, and the body of the martyr was buried in the porch of a neighbouring church, a vast multitude, Protestants as well as Catholics, respectfully attending the funeral.



IV

Franciscan martyrs: Charles Mahony—Circumstances of his death—
John Wall, his captivity, his gentleness.

BESIDES Benedictines and Jesuits several Franciscans also about the same time suffered death or else an imprisonment involving sufferings no less cruel if more obscure.

Charles Mahony, who belonged to the Irish province of the order, was merely passing through England at the time when Titus Oates, by his calumnies, was stirring up hatred against Catholics throughout the land. He was arrested in Wales when on the point of embarking for Ireland, his own country. Accused of being a Catholic priest, he was taken before the magistrates at the little town of

Ruthin. He did not deny his sacerdotal character; and for it alone was condemned to execution as a traitor. He went to his death, clad in the brown habit of St Francis, once so dear and so familiar in the Isle of Saints, but which had not been seen there for nearly a century.

He spoke a few words to the people, remarking on the injustice of his treatment, for he had never exercised his ministry in England, but was merely travelling through it to return home. "But," he added, "may God forgive you as freely as I do. I will always pray for you." He died with great resignation. Instead of the earthly country to which he was on his way God called him to his eternal home, more peaceful and more fair.*

The above details are all that have come down to us relating to Friar Mahony, but in regard to another Franciscan martyr there remain abundant particulars. A gentleman in Lancashire, named Wall, had three sons. John, the eldest, was ordained priest at Rome in 1645, and afterwards became a Franciscan at Douai; William, the second son, was professed as a Benedictine in Germany; having returned as a missionary to England, he was arrested, condemned to death and finally released. The two elder sons having thus renounced the world, the family heritage passed to the youngest son. As we shall often have occasion to observe, persecution revived the fervour of the old families who remained true to the faith, and vocations were numerous among them at the very time when the sacerdotal office was an almost certain passport to martyrdom.

* Challoner, ii, 215.

We learn from his contemporaries that John Wall, the Franciscan, known in the order as Joachim of St Anne, was singularly attractive in character. Both at Douai, where he passed the earlier part of his religious life, and in England, where he spent twelve years as a missionary, he left a deep impression of solid virtue.* Being thrown into prison at Worcester in 1678, he wrote a journal of his captivity. "A prison," he says, "teaches a man to put all his trust in God. If we understood things rightly, a dungeon would be preferable to a palace; imprisonment for the faith better than all freedom. As for me, if God grant me His grace and the faithful give me their prayers, I shall be perfectly happy."†

Being tried at the assizes, Father Wall was condemned for the crime of high treason. After listening to the barbarous sentence he saluted the jury with the high-bred courtesy natural to him, and exclaimed, "Thanks be to God. God save the king. I pray God to bless this honourable tribunal." The judge, much troubled, answered, "You have spoken very well. I will not have you executed until I know the king's good pleasure."

This supernatural sweetness was not merely on the lips of the condemned; it filled his soul. "I was not disturbed," he writes, "by any unkind thoughts in regard to the judge or the jury or the witnesses. By the grace of God I felt inclined to look upon them as the best friends I ever had in my life."

This mingled firmness and gentleness greatly impressed several Protestant gentlemen present, and they

* See Challoner, ii, 228.

† Mrs Hope, *Franciscan Martyrs*, 234.

expressed to him the pain they felt at his condemnation. He mildly remonstrated with them for regretting that which caused him so much joy—a joy that lighted up his countenance and was evident in his bearing.



V

Father Wall's popularity—His execution—His tomb.

FATHER WALL'S popularity was by no means confined to the higher classes : he was greatly beloved by the people. The townsfolk of Worcester showed themselves so strongly opposed to his execution that the authorities, not daring to carry out the sentence or, still less, to release him, decided to send him to London.

In a letter written to his friend, Charles Trinder, the father gives an account of his journey, of the endeavours made to involve him in the pretended plot, of his being confronted with Oates, who, in spite of his impudence, was obliged to own that he did not know him, and of the promise made that his life would be saved if he would consent to apostatize. The letter concludes, “May the will of God be done as in heaven so on earth ; and may He, of His mercy, lead me to the happiness of heaven.”* And at the bottom of the page the respectful hand of Charles Trinder has added a note in which he attests the supernatural joy and courage of the religious who had honoured him with his friendship.

Four months later, notwithstanding that the avowals of Titus Oates himself testified to his innocence, and in spite of the popularity he enjoyed and the sympathy

* Challoner, ii, 218.

he had won, Father Wall was executed at Worcester. On August 20, 1679, he was visited by the Franciscan Father William Levison, who confessed him and brought him holy communion. "He was overflowing with joy," the father wrote, "and longing to shed his blood for the love of God." Two days afterwards he received his crown. The place of his execution had already, early in the century, been hallowed by the death of two Jesuits, Edward Oldcorne and Ralph Ashley.* Father Levison, at the foot of the gallows, aided with his prayers his brother and friend to the last.

The body of the martyred friar was buried in St Oswald's chapel yard; and it was noticed that his grave remained fresh and green long after the rest of the ground was bare and dried up. His head was taken to his former monastery at Douai, where it was preserved until the French revolution, when the community, in the confusion of a compulsory flight, lost the relic so precious to them.



VI

Execution of William Plessington—Apostolic life of Nicholas Postgate—He composes a hymn—His martyrdom.

FOUR secular priests also at this same period of Oates' plot were put to death in the country parts, William Piessington, Nicholas Postgate, John Kemble and Thomas Thwing. Two of these were over eighty years of age.

* Father Oldcorne, a Jesuit priest, and R. Ashley, a lay-brother of the same order, were falsely accused of participation in the gunpowder plot, and were most cruelly tortured before being put to death, April 7, 1606.

William Plessington's father was a brave and loyal gentleman, to whom Charles I entrusted the command of one of his fortresses. As the penalty of his devotion to the royal cause Cromwell imprisoned him and confiscated all his property. The son of this faithful servant of the Stuarts was now executed at Chester, as a traitor to his country, on July 19, 1679, with the consent of the king for whose father his relations had fought and suffered. Faithful to the traditions of his family, the martyr-priest, when about to die, affirmed his devotion to the Catholic Church and his attachment to his sovereign, whose loyal subject he had always been.

Less than a month afterwards was executed at York a priest eighty-two years old, Nicholas Postgate, whose name is even yet, after two centuries, held in veneration in some lonely parts of Yorkshire, where he laboured for fifty years.

He had a remarkable gift of winning souls, and is said to have effected upwards of a thousand conversions. He was above all the apostle of those of low estate, and had adopted the garb, food and simple manner of life of his beloved poor. After attaining the age of eighty years he was no longer able to continue his distant expeditions to visit his widely-scattered flock, and lived retired in a hut thatched with straw. An old ballad describes "the venerable priest with looks serene," leading an angel's life in his poor hut upon the bleak hill-side.

Worn-out as he was by his long life of toil, he did not escape the pitiless persecution let loose upon the realm. He was arrested, taken to York, convicted of being a priest and for this crime condemned to die.

He received his sentence with joy ; and while awaiting his execution composed in prison a simple hymn which is still sung in that part of the country evangelized by his labours, where the light of the ancient faith has never been extinguished. The following three stanzas are a portion of the martyr's hymn :

O sweetest Lord, lend me the wings
Of faith and perfect love ;
That I may fly from earthly things
And mount to those above.

For there is joy both true and fast,
And no cause to lament ;
But here is toil, both first and last,
And cause oft to repent.

* * * * *

My wearied wings, sweet Jesus, mark,
And when Thou thinkest best
Stretch forth Thy hand out of the ark
And take me to Thy rest. *

The aged priest was drawn on a hurdle from his prison to Knavesmire, the Tyburn of York, calm and serene to the last, speaking little and dying with great courage.



VII

John Kemble—His gaiety, simplicity, and generosity—His execution—Favours obtained at his tomb.

SCARCELY less aged than Nicholas Postgate was John Kemble, a missionary in the county of Hereford. In this priest of eighty years old, a gentleman by birth and education, were combined some of the finest

qualities of his race, perfected by life-long habits of self-sacrifice—simplicity, courage and a certain geniality in doing heroic deeds gaily, as a matter of course.

An apostate member of the Catholic family of Scudamore in that county having put the pursuivants on his track, he was arrested at Pembridge Castle, Welsh Newton, Herefordshire. Being warned of their approach, he might have escaped them but refused to attempt it, saying that at eighty years of age he had but a short time to live, and preferred to profit by the chance offered him of dying for God.

Imprisoned first at Hereford and then in London, he was finally sent back to Hereford for execution. He suffered from a very painful internal malady, and these long journeys on horseback along the frightfully rugged roads of those days caused him veritable torture. During his imprisonment in London he was the object of affectionate care and attention from the Catholics who were allowed to visit the captive priests.*

When the aged priest, sick and feeble, as he is described by a fellow-prisoner, also a priest,† returned for the last time to Hereford, he had lost nothing of his joyous humour. When the constable in charge of him pointed out Hereford and told him it was the place where he was to die, the brave old martyr said, "Well, let us sit down and look at it while we smoke a pipe." It is said that the people in that part of the country, to this day, speak of "Kemble's pipe" when they wish to describe perfect self-possession in danger.‡

The children of the Protestant Scudamore often visited in prison him whom their father had delivered

* *Records*, v, 909. † Charles Carne, afterwards released.

‡ Father Morris, S.J., *The English Martyrs, a Lecture*, p. 23.

over to his enemies, and it was observed that the old priest received them with loving cordiality, distributing among them the little dainties his friends had brought to supplement the poor and insufficient prison fare. "Is not the father of these children my best friend?" he said to some who wondered at his generosity.

On August 22, 1679, the aged priest was taken to Wigmarsh, near Hereford, to be executed. His kindly, joyous spirit never failed him for an instant. "Come, good Anthony," he said, grasping the hand of the executioner, "have no fear, my friend. Do well what thou hast to do; I forgive thee with all my heart, for thou doest me a service, so I cannot take it hardly of thee." With the same simplicity he said a few words to the people. "They want me to speak, but I am but a poor old man, and have but very little to say." He contented himself by protesting that he knew nothing of the pretended plot, that he died for the faith, and that he begged forgiveness of any whom he might have offended as, for his part, he freely forgave his enemies.

Then, pulling the cap over his eyes, he knelt down for a brief space, and himself gave the signal to the hangman. He was heard to repeat three times with great fervour, *In manus tuas, Domine, commendō spiritum meum.* The rope being badly adjusted, his agony lasted half an hour.

The simple heroism with which this aged man accepted his martyrdom made a deep impression on all who witnessed it, and the Protestants who were present declared that this old priest of eighty years of age died as a gentleman and a Christian.*

* Challoner, ii, 220.

Richard Kemble, a nephew of the martyr, obtained possession of the head of his venerable uncle. He buried it at Welsh Newton, where the Catholics of the neighbouring country parts were accustomed to go and pray, and where remarkable favours were obtained by the martyr's intercession. It was remarked that he appeared to have retained in eternity the special good-will he had shown in his earthly lifetime towards the author of his death and his family. One of Scudamore's daughters was cured of a dangerous malady in the throat by applying to the part affected the rope by which the holy priest had been hung; and Catherine Scudamore, a relative who was deaf, recovered her hearing on praying at his tomb.*



VIII

Thomas Thwing, last secular priest executed under Charles II—
Injustice of the proceedings against him—Executed at the
Knavesmire, York.—Inscription on the martyr's coffin.

THE last name on our list of the secular priests executed under Charles II is that of a Yorkshire gentleman, Thomas Thwing. After fifteen years of apostleship in his native province he was arrested and brought before the assizes at York. The proceedings at his trial were marked by revolting injustice. The witnesses who deposed against him were, like Oates and Bedloe in London, men of reprobate lives whose evidence was full of contradictions.

Thomas Thwing belonged to one of those old northern families whose fidelity to the Catholic

* It is still customary for the Catholics of Herefordshire to go on pilgrimage to Welsh Newton on the anniversary of his martyrdom.

Church was, like their chivalrous bravery, hereditary in their race. Many others belonging to his family had given splendid proofs of their devotion to the old faith in times of great difficulty, and several of these were arrested and brought to trial at the same time as himself. He alone was condemned to death.

He had bravely defended his cause, protesting with the indignation of a loyal gentleman against the lying accusation of having conspired against his sovereign. Finding that all defence was in vain, he bowed his head and said no more, except, *innocens ego sum.*

On October 23, 1679, he was drawn along that sorrowful way by which more than forty priests had preceded him, and which leads from York Castle to Knavesmire, the calvary of our martyrs of the north. There with a smiling face he spoke to the people, affirmed his loyalty to the king and his charity towards all men, prayed for the royal family, pardoned his enemies and, at the moment he was being turned off the ladder, exclaimed, “Sweet Jesus, receive my soul !” *

Thus died this worthy son of the faithful county of York, which, next to London, gave to the Catholic Church of England the largest number of confessors and martyrs.

The sacred remains of Thomas Thwing were given to his friends, who interred them in the churchyard of St Mary at York. Many years afterwards, when some excavations were made in a part of the ground, a brass plate was found which had been placed on the coffin.

* *Records*, v, 862.

Its inscription is applicable to each one of the noble sufferers for the faith whose story we are briefly relating: “Thomas Thwing, condemnatus et martyrio affectus est, a duobus falsis testibus ob crimen conspirationis tunc catholicis malitiose impositum.” *

* St Mary's Convent, York, possesses some linen dipped in the blood of Thomas Thwing, and the Herbert family in the same county his sacerdotal vestments.

CHAPTER VII

WILLIAM, VISCOUNT STAFFORD, AND OLIVER
PLUNKETT, ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH

I

Oates is anxious to compromise a prominent Catholic nobleman—Five peers of the realm are arrested—Charles II suffers the Catholic peers to be deprived of their right to sit in the House of Lords—Extract from Lingard.

FROM the beginning of the dark intrigue in which he was the chief instrument, Titus Oates had aimed at compromising by his denunciations not priests and religious only, but also members of the Catholic laity who were prominent by their intelligence, position or fortune. He affirmed before the House of Commons that Father Oliva,* general of the Jesuits, had been instructed by the pope to distribute the principal offices of the realm of England to certain Catholics, and that he himself had seen with his own eyes the letters patent conferring these various functions upon them. Thus, Lord Arundel,† he said, was nominated lord

* Giovanni-Paolo Oliva, born at Genoa, eleventh general of the Society, elected 1664, died 1681.

† Henry, third Lord Arundel of Wardour, head of an ancient family, one of whose members, Thomas Arundel, served in the Imperial army in Hungary, and with his own hands captured the Turkish standard. For this feat of arms he was created count of the Holy Roman Empire by the Emperor Rudolf II. The present head of the family is John Francis, twelfth Baron Arundel, married to Anne Lucy Errington.

chancellor ; Lord Bellasyse, commander-in-chief of the army ; Lord Petre,* lieutenant general ; Sir William Godolphin, keeper of the great seal ; Coleman, † secretary of state. To these unlikely declarations Bedloe, Oates's accomplice, afterwards added other details : The king was to be assassinated, and the government put in the hands of Lord Arundel and the other Catholic peers ; an army of 30,000 pilgrims was to embark from Spain to join an army levied in England by Lord Petre and Lord Powis ; the Protestants were then to be exterminated. He added that the chief Catholics of the realm had sworn on the sacred Host to accomplish these designs.

These extravagant affirmations were accepted without examination by the Commons, who immediately caused Lords Arundel, Bellasyse, Powis, Petre and Stafford to be arrested and imprisoned in the Tower. Shortly after this violent measure, a still heavier blow was struck at the Catholic party. Shaftesbury was determined to compass the exclusion of James, Duke of York, from the succession to the throne, his conversion to the Catholic Church rendering him an object of hatred to the fanatics. In this matter Charles proved that he still possessed some remains of honour and conscience. He loved his brother, although he had often shown himself feeble in defending him ; also he still had too much sense of his duty as a king to suffer interference with the order of succession to the crown.

* William, fourth Lord Petre, died in the Tower in 1683 after five years of captivity. Head of an old family steadfast to the faith, he left only one daughter, Mary, married to George Heneage. His title passed successively to his brothers. The present head of the family is Bernard, fourteenth Baron Petre.

† Secretary to the Duchess of York, and one of Oates's first victims.

On this point, therefore, he offered an unexpected resistance to the projects of Shaftesbury, but by a cowardly compromise was willing to make compensation for his resistance by new and disgraceful concessions. Whilst maintaining the rights of the Duke of York to the succession he nevertheless allowed him to be excluded from the Privy Council, and also conceded the exclusion of the Catholic peers from the House of Lords.

This last concession was only extorted from him after long hesitation ; and in making it he excused himself on the ground of deference to the alarm aroused by the frenzied state of the public mind—a state which Shaftesbury had by his own machinations produced. “By this statute,” says Lingard, “which owed its enactment to the perjuries of an impostor and the delusion of the nation, the Catholic peers found themselves, without any fault of theirs, deprived of the most valuable privilege of the peerage, the right which they derived from their birth of sitting and voting in the higher House of Parliament. Nor were they the only victims ; the unjust proscription attached to their descendants during a long lapse of 150 years. It was reserved for a prince of the house of Brunswick, the fourth who swayed the sceptre of these realms, and an enlightened and liberal Parliament to erase the foul blot from the statute book, and by an act of tardy but praiseworthy justice to restore the sufferers to the exercise of their ancient and hereditary rights.”*

Of the twenty-one peers struck by this measure,

* Lingard, ix, 185.

three only denied their faith to preserve their privileges; the rest resigned themselves to this new injustice added to many a preceding one.



II

The prisoners of the Tower: Lord Petre—His letters to the king—Lord Arundel of Wardour—His character—He prepares his defence—His prestige and talents cause alarm.

THE five peers arrested in October, 1678, on the accusation of Oates, and from that date imprisoned in the Tower, were all men of great merit, whose blameless antecedents were their best defence.

One of them, William, Lord Petre, died in prison after six years of so rigorous a captivity that, in April, 1679, a special authorization of Parliament was necessary before he could be allowed to go, closely guarded, to visit his wife in her confinement. In 1684, a short time before death released him, Lord Petre wrote to the king, “Hoping that your majesty will pardon the presumption of a dying and most dutiful subject,” he continues, after praying for the king’s happiness in time and in eternity, “having been five years in prison, falsely charged with a horrible conspiracy . . . and being now summoned to another world before I have been enabled by means of juridical process to prove my innocence, I deem it necessary to make the following declaration to your majesty and to the whole world.” He then shows the falsehood of the charges against himself and also against the teaching of the Catholic Church, “of which I am, and by the grace of God shall die a member”; and concludes,

“living or dying I am your majesty’s most obedient and faithful subject.”

Lord Petre’s Christian spirit and the indestructible loyalty which the king’s injustice could never weary, are also to be found in fully equal measure in another prisoner, Lord Arundel, the finished type of a soldier and a gentleman. The chief of an illustrious race, Henry, Baron Arundel of Wardour, had been brought up in traditional devotion to the Catholic Church and loyalty to his king. His father had died, May 19, 1643, of wounds received in fighting for Charles I; his mother was that admirable Lady Arundel* who heroically defended Wardour Castle against the parliamentary forces, and who, after sustaining a nine days’ siege, went out, with head erect, from her ruined dwelling.

He himself had fought under the royal standard, and when Charles II was restored to the throne this loyal servant of the Stuarts had for all his riches nothing but the remembrance of a long and glorious past. His castle was destroyed in the civil war and his fortune ruined. John Weldon, a priest and a friend of the family, compared his misfortunes to those of holy Job. “The rebels,” he says, “seized your children and your virtuous wife; they pillaged and demolished your home, and sold your estates; and you have been driven to seek subsistence in a foreign land.”† In all these heavy trials Lord Arundel “possessed his soul

* Blanche, Lady Arundel, was daughter to Edward Somerset, Marquis of Worcester. Wardour Castle was besieged, May 2, 1643, by Cromwell’s troops. The garrison was composed of twenty-five men who, encouraged by Lady Arundel, to whom her husband had entrusted the defence of his castle, performed prodigies of valour.

† *The Divine Pedagogue*, by John Weldon, priest. Dedicated to Lord Arundel, *Records*, iii, 532.

in patience," never being heard to complain, even when fresh sufferings were inflicted upon him by the sovereign in whose cause he had sacrificed his all.

When, with the four other peers, he was taken to the Tower on October 26, 1678, Lord Arundel, certain of his innocence and jealous for his honour, emphatically insisted on being taken before the tribunal; but the ministers, knowing how baseless were the accusations of their perjured witnesses against him, dared not permit this intelligent and energetic man, renowned for his splendid services in the royal cause, to appear at the bar and plead his own. The demand of the prisoner to be tried remained unanswered therefore; but he spent much time in carefully preparing his defence in the hope that he might be summoned, and the voluminous documents thus written by him in the Tower are still preserved in the archives at Wardour Castle. They prove this brave soldier to have been a man of sound judgement, clear, judicious and logical. The falsehoods of Oates are one by one examined and refuted, and in support of his own statements he gives a minute and exact report of the occupation of each day, where and with whom it was spent, so that each statement could be verified by other persons, and this at the time his accusers represented him as busied in plots and conspiracies.

In perusing these MSS. it is easy to understand what would have been the alarm of Shaftesbury and his minions, had Lord Arundel been allowed to answer for himself at a public trial. The people, always fickle, would not have heard without emotion the words with which he closes his defence: "I have lost my blood and ruined my fortune as is well known. . . .

How improbable is it that I should now, at four-score years of age, turn rebel and sacrifice that loyalty which I have always cherished more than my life!"* The Christian submission of the noble prisoner is as complete as his fidelity to his sovereign: "Whether the sentence pronounced upon me be to life or death, *sit nomen Domini benedictum*. The last paper of the collection clearly shows the expectation of a judgement to death. This paper, yellow with age, is headed "The last intended speech," and is the discourse he prepared to be delivered on the scaffold. In it he says: "In the first place I declare that I am neither afraid nor ashamed to own that, by God's grace, I die a member, though unworthy, of the Roman Catholic Church, for which I humbly thank God, though in a time when she is persecuted in her members and her doctrine reviled and slandered by false and malicious imputations laid upon it." He then prays for the king, protests his innocence, pardons his enemies and prays for their conversion.

The sacrifice of his life for which he had prepared in the solitude of his prison was not required of him. Not daring to bring him to trial and not wishing to set him free, his enemies kept him a prisoner in the Tower until the death of Charles II. He was then released, together with Lords Powis and Bellasyse, his companions in misfortune. James II, desiring to make some reparation for his brother's ingratitude, made Lord Arundel a privy councillor and keeper of the Great Seal. After the fall of James, he spent the last years of his long life at his castle of Wardour, where he died December 28, 1694, after "having lived to the welfare

* *Records*, v, 835, 836.

of his country, the honour of his prince and the glory of his God.”*



III

Lord Stafford arraigned before the tribunal—Motive for selecting him—His gentle disposition—His sufferings—Hostile demonstration of the mob.

SHAFESBURY, baffled hitherto, still held to his determination of propping up the tottering credit of the pretended plot, and with it his own credit and that of the majorities in both Houses, who had so loudly proclaimed their belief in it. To maintain the reputation of the party a conviction was necessary, and the victim selected was Lord Stafford † who, on account of his age and infirmities, appeared the least able to make a powerful defence.

After his arrest with the four other Catholic peers he remained two years in the Tower before he was brought to trial at Westminster on November 30, 1680, the day he attained his sixty-ninth year, charged with intent to assassinate the king.

The trial was conducted with the greatest inhumanity. The noble prisoner was exposed during the proceedings to insults capable of unnerving the stoutest heart. Each day as he proceeded to the hall or returned to the Tower he was surrounded and assailed by crowds of miscreants with yells and impre-

* Quotation in *Records*, v, 828.

† William Howard, Viscount Stafford, whose grandfather, Philip Earl of Arundel, died in the Tower after a long and cruel captivity under Elizabeth, was the son of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, and Lady Alethea Talbot. The present head of the illustrious house of Howard is Henry, fifteenth Duke of Norfolk.

cations. He complained to the court of such treatment, but in vain. When on the second day the false witness, Dugdale, deposed to the assent given by Lord Stafford to the murder of the king, a savage cheer of congratulation burst from the members of both Houses and ran through the hall. The prisoner's counsel were not allowed to stand near him lest they might suggest to him some question or remark useful for his defence or embarrassing to their witnesses.

It was then that his daughter Isabel, Marchioness of Winchester, took her place at his side, supporting him by her presence and suggestions.

When the Commons had concluded the case the accused solicited the respite of a day to prepare his answer, urging his fatigue, infirmities and want of sleep; they withheld their assent, and the Lords, through fear of giving offence, also had the inhumanity to refuse a request which even the high steward had pronounced reasonable and just.



IV

Pusillanimity of the Lords—Accusations against Lord Stafford—His defence—His calmness—His condemnation.

IT has been truly said by M. Guizot that Lord Stafford was sacrificed to the frenzy of the people and the cowardice of the Lords,* but it is the latter especially who were answerable for the disgrace of his condemnation to death. A considerable number of the Lords had followed Shaftesbury's lead in his campaign against the Catholics, had helped him in stimulating the bigotry of the populace and in maintaining the

* *Études Biographiques sur la Révolution d'Angleterre*, p. 48.

credit of the contrivers of the plot. The acquittal of Lord Stafford would have proved them to be either deceivers or deceived. To these reasons, such as they were, must be added another. The check Shaftesbury had met with in his endeavour to procure the exclusion of the Duke of York from the throne had excited in his party a double amount of hatred against the Papists; and this hatred, thirsting for a victim, fixed upon Lord Stafford.*

After giving the story of the plot, as it had been formulated in the brains of Oates and Tonge, the witnesses made a direct attack upon the prisoners. Dugdale affirmed that Lord Stafford promised £500 to anybody who would assassinate the king; Oates added that he had seen a document by which Father Oliva, the general of the Jesuits, conferred on the prisoner an important post in the government which was to take the place of that of Charles II. Turberville, an apostate whom want of money had made a perjurer, confirmed the depositions of his accomplices.

Lord Stafford boldly met the charges against him. Each of the three witnesses was, he maintained, a perjured villain, and whoever impartially considers his proofs must admit the truth of the assertion.† In his defence he recalled the countless proofs of his loyal devotion to the king's cause, and reminded his judges that he had remained quietly at home, leading his ordinary life throughout the time of extraordinary excitement which had ensued on the first denunciations of Oates. Had he been a conspirator, was it likely that he would continue to show himself openly,

* Lingard, ix, 245.

† The evidence is fully given in Lingard, ix, 240-244.

taking his seat as usual in the House of Lords instead of seeking safety by concealment or flight? Was his conduct that of a man who was plotting the murder of his sovereign? He also related how two commissioners from the House of Lords as well as others from the council had come to him in the Tower with the promise of a free pardon if he would only confess that he knew of the conspiracy. Was it conceivable that, with the knowledge of the fate of those who were found guilty and which awaited himself if convicted, he would have refused the proposal if he had been conscious of guilt? He also clearly proved that he was at Bath at the date when Dugdale declared him to have been conspiring with Lord Aston at Tixall, and continued to expose one falsehood after another with the utmost clearness in the self-contradictory evidence of his accusers.

But Lord Stafford's destruction was already resolved upon by Shaftesbury and his party. On the seventh day of his trial the Lords assembled in Westminster Hall, and, in spite of his firm and lucid defence, the prisoner was condemned to death by a majority of twenty-four votes; thirty-one declaring him innocent, fifty-five guilty.* He was then brought in and informed of the result. "God's holy name be praised," he answered; "I confess I am surprised at it, but God's will be done, and your Lordships'; I will not murmur. God forgive those who have sworn falsely against me."

* The Protestant historians, Hume, Echard, Campbell, Green and Guizot, are unanimous in stigmatizing the base injustice of the Lords on this occasion,

V

Surprise of the condemned—His resignation—His request—Visits he receives in the Tower—His frank and clear declaration of the political attitude of his party—His sentence is modified to beheading.

THEN the high steward, after a laboured speech, adjudged the noble old man to die the death of a traitor. When the atrocious sentence was pronounced, “My Lords,” said the unfortunate viscount, “I do here, in the presence of Almighty God, declare that I have no malice in my heart against those who have condemned me. But I have one humble request to make: that for the short time I have to live I may not be a close prisoner as I have been of late, but may be allowed to see my wife and children and friends.”*

The request was granted, the Lords adding that they would make suit to his majesty to remit every part of the sentence but the striking off his head. At these words he burst into tears; but suddenly collecting himself said, “My Lords, it is not your justice but your kindness that makes me weep.”†

During the civil war Lord Stafford, as was the case with all the Catholics of the kingdom, had freely made great sacrifices in the cause of the Stuarts; and the favour of being allowed simply to lose his head by the royal warrant may well have struck his generous and loyal heart as a singular form of acknowledgement on his sovereign’s part of devoted and life-long service. Being remanded to the Tower, he was visited by,

* Lingard, ix, 245.

† Ibid.

among others, Dr Burnet and the Bishop of London, who wished to argue with him in favour of Protestantism ; but he answered that the short time remaining to him was too precious to be spent in unavailing controversy. They then tried to extract from him some avowal of the existence of a papistical plot ; but he answered, as before to his judges, that he had no knowledge nor even any suspicion of any such thing. As they continued to harrass him with questions, he consented to state before the House of Peers the actual measures his coreligionists proposed to take for the amelioration of their oppressed condition—measures which were perfectly legal and reasonable. He affirmed, as was already known, that the Catholics had several times endeavoured to obtain by legitimate means the toleration which the king had promised them and to which they had a right, and that long ago he himself had proposed to exchange the fines and penalties to which they were subject for the annual payment of £100,000 to the king. Lord Shaftesbury, who was then chancellor, approved the offer, but the Catholics objected to so large a sum, impoverished as they were already. Other plans were proposed for obtaining, always by legal means, a modification of the oath of allegiance and supremacy, and securing that liberty of conscience for which the king had given his word. None of these projects were secret or had anything mysterious about them, and had all been communicated to the Duke of York, the ministers and to Shaftesbury himself.

The moment Shaftesbury was mentioned the House interrupted the prisoner. He was not brought there to defame the great champion of Protestantism, but

to disclose the plot ; and on his renewed and solemn declaration that he never had any knowledge of a plot he was again sent back to the Tower.

The same day the sheriffs, Cornish and Bethel, received the warrant for his decapitation, but disputed its validity on the score that the prisoner, having been condemned to die the ordinary death of a traitor, the king could not interfere. Lord Russell in particular, a zealous Protestant, disgraced himself by urging that the sentence should not be commuted into simple beheading ; and, in his remorseless bigotry, questioned the king's right to even this mitigated form of mercy.*



VI

Lord Stafford's piety—His farewell letters—The day of his execution—
His fortitude—The changed demeanour of the crowd—Lord Stafford's speech—His prayer—His death.

ON being for the last time remanded to the Tower, Lord Stafford bent his whole mind on the thoughts of eternity. Within the massive walls of the old fortress that had formerly been the scene of the blessed Philip Howard's long and cruel captivity and death, his noble grandson, condemned for the same cause, followed in his footsteps to the same reward.

* Three years later Lord Russell, having taken part in a real plot, the Rye House Plot, to dethrone Charles II in favour of his illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, was arrested in his turn and condemned to the death of a traitor. Charles commuted it into beheading, but he did not forget Lord Russell's inhumanity in regard to the Catholic Lord Stafford, falsely accused of conspiracy which had no existence. "My Lord Russell," he said, "will now see that I have a power to change his sentence."

The prisoner, we are told, was continually in prayer, only interrupting his devotions to receive his friends, whom he welcomed with the cheerfulness and sweetness of manner habitual to him, and would not let them pity him. His perfect calmness is revealed in the letters he wrote from his prison. Two of these are addressed to his daughter, Ursula, a nun in the English Convent of Canonesses Regular of St Augustine in Louvain.* The first is dated "From the Tower, July 14, 1679," before his trial. "Good daughter," he writes, "I know the misfortune that I am in is a greate greife unto you; but I pray you give yourselfe this assurance, that it is come upon me by my misfortune and not by any fault of myne, I being totally innocent of what I am so unjustly accused of, as I doute not but to make appeare by the grace of God: in the meantime and allways I doe most willingly and cherefuly submitt to His holy will, beseeching Him most humbly to grante me grace to make that good use that I ought to doe.

"I am ever

"Your most affectionate father,

"W."

The next letter is without date, but evidently written after his condemnation: "Good daughter, I know you will beare what happens to me with patience and resignation. I thanke God that I know myself in every kind innocent, and that I have confidence in God's mercy, and doute not but through the mercy

* The English Augustinians—now at Bruges, Haywards Heath and Abbotsleigh.

and passion of our Saviour to obtain everlasting happynesse. I pray God blesse you.

“I am, your affectionate father,
“For Ursula.

“WILLIAM.”

The third letter is addressed to his niece, the Countess of Arundel.* In it he bequeaths to his nephew, her husband, “the sword that was our great ancestor’s at the battle of Flodden Field,” on the condition that it remains as an heir-loom in his, the earl’s family. The blood of the old fighting Plantagenets thus asserts itself once more in their descendant, careful to preserve to the head of his house the trophy of the valour of his fathers. Then he adds, “God bless you all. I am near my death, and with that will averre my innocence.”

On Sunday, December 19, the lieutenant of the Tower announced to the prisoner that the 29th was the day fixed upon for his execution. “I obey,” he answered; “this is the day which the Lord hath made, let us then rejoice.” Then turning to the countess, his wife, who had burst into tears, he said, “Come, let us pray.” The memoirs published the year after the execution state that during these last days the old man’s gentle serenity and his charity in regard to his enemies made a deep impression on all who approached him.†

On the morning of the fatal 29th Lord Stafford

* Probably Mary Mordaunt, wife of Henry Howard, who was great-nephew of Lord Stafford and became the seventh Duke of Norfolk. The three letters, copied from the originals, are given in Lingard, ix, 257, 258 (appendix).

† *Stafford Memoirs*, 1681, Challoner, ii, 229.

appeared eager for the arrival of the lieutenant of the Tower. About ten o'clock he was told that the lieutenant was waiting for him. Calmly he saluted his friends, beseeching them not to be sorrowful on his account, "For this day," he added, "is the fairest day of my life." The weather being bitterly cold, he accepted the offer of a cloak, saying that if he should shiver from cold it might be mistaken for fear. He then proceeded, with a steady step and cheerful countenance, to the place of execution through a double file of soldiers to the outer gate of the fortress; crossing first the wide court where, a hundred and forty years before, another descendant of the Plantagenets, blessed Margaret Pole,* Countess of Salisbury and maternal grandmother of Lady Stafford, had died for the faith. The lieutenant of the Tower, being infirm, was carried in a sedan chair by his side. Arrived at the Tower gate, the lieutenant handed over his prisoner to the two sheriffs charged to preside at the execution. The scaffold was erected on Tower Hill at a short distance from the spot now

* Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, daughter of the Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV and last direct representative of the Plantagenets of the house of York. As the friend of Catherine of Arragon and her daughter Mary Tudor, Margaret was an object of hatred to Henry VIII. She was, moreover, the mother of Cardinal Reginald Pole, who courageously withstood Henry's project of divorce. After a rigorous imprisonment the aged countess was beheaded May 28, 1541. When led to execution she refused to lay her head upon the block. "My head never committed treason"; she exclaimed, "if you will have it you must take it as you can." As the executioner struck his first blow she said, "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake," then the murder was consummated. Together with many more of our English martyrs this princess was beatified by Leo XIII in 1886.

occupied by a Catholic church dedicated to the English martyrs.*

A considerable crowd had assembled round the scaffold. At first, on Lord Stafford's appearance, a few yells and groans were heard, but as he passed on his calm and noble aspect seemed to hush the throng. The people treated him with respect, and many uncovered their heads. "It seemed," says a contemporary, "as if the innocence of his soul shone through the envelope of his body." Mounting the scaffold he addressed the people with a firm voice and much animation, indignantly repelling the foul calumnies which had been uttered against his religion at his trial, and asserted his own innocence in the most energetic terms. He then knelt down, and, after praying for some time, rose; and declaring his attachment to the Catholic Church and to the king, his sovereign, added that he thanked God for having given him time to prepare for death, protested that he died for his faith and for that only, and ended by saying, "With my last breath I declare that I am innocent." The spectators listened to him bareheaded, and answered with cries of, "We believe you, my lord! God bless you, my lord! we believe you!" Embracing the friends who accompanied him to the end, he knelt down, made the sign of the cross, and kissed the block, saying with great fervour, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul!"

The executioner poised his axe in the air as if taking aim, but, checking himself, brought it down again to his feet. Lord Stafford, raising his head, in-

* Church of the English Martyrs, Great Prescot Street, built in 1876.

quired the cause of the delay ; and was told that he waited for a sign. "Take your own time," he replied ; "I shall make no sign." "Do you forgive me, sir ?" said the executioner. "I do," was his reply. Laying his head again upon the block, it was severed at one stroke from the body. This day was the feast of our glorious martyr, St Thomas of Canterbury, who died for the liberties and rights of the Catholic Church. The body of Lord Stafford was buried in the chapel of the Tower, the burial place of so many illustrious victims. The spirit with which he had defended himself at the trial, says Lingard, surpassed the expectations of his friends and confounded the hopes of his enemies ; and his Christian piety and fearless deportment on the scaffold confirmed the growing opinion of his innocence. The patrons of the plot derived no benefit from his death.*

* The direct descendants of Lord Stafford are at the present time represented by Fitzsbert Edward Jerningham, Baron Stafford, of Costessey Park. Lord Stafford, the martyr, had only one son, John Stafford Howard, who died without issue. His sister Mary, therefore, became his heiress. She married Francis Plowden, a Catholic gentleman, and accompanied him to St Germain's, where both were attached to the household of James II and Queen Mary Beatrice of Modena. Their daughter, Mary, married Sir George Jerningham, to whom she brought her mother's rights to the title of Stafford ; but in consequence of the execution of their ancestor, the descendants of Lord Stafford might not bear this title. It was not until 1826 that this interdict was removed, and that George Jerningham grandson of Lady Jerningham, *née* Plowden, resumed the name rendered famous by his martyred ancestor.

VII

Archbishop Plunkett, the last martyr under Charles II—His poverty and sanctity—Is denounced by two priests whom he had suspended for misconduct—He is sent to London—Accusations against him—His defence—His sentence.

IN this long series of martyrs sent to their deaths in circumstances so cruel and unjust we have seen all classes of society represented: rich and poor, gentlemen and artisans, priests and religious. The solemn procession is worthily closed by an archbishop.

Oliver Plunkett belonged to a family settled in Ireland from the eleventh century.* He was ordained priest at Rome, and spent there the first twenty years of his sacerdotal life,—calm and peaceful years to be followed by an arduous and stormy episcopate and a violent death.

In 1669 he became Archbishop of Armagh, the primatial see of Ireland, and in that difficult position showed himself gentle, benevolent and entirely devoted to his duties as a pastor of souls. He won the esteem of even certain Protestant writers least disposed to speak in praise of Catholics. Burnet, in spite of his prejudices, bears testimony to the good and holy life of the archbishop, whom he calls a “sober and moderate man,” † and Echard affirms that the Lords Berkeley and Essex, governors of Ireland, delivered to him

* The present head of this family is Arthur Plunkett, Earl of Fingall, son of the tenth earl and of Élise Rio, daughter of the eminent French writer.

† *History*, p. 502. Challoner, ii, 234. Lingard says “his loyalty had been attested by four successive governors of Ireland,” x, 14.

a certificate attesting that his conduct had been perfectly correct in regard to the civil power.*

Although bearing the title of Primate of Ireland, Archbishop Plunkett lived as a poor man in the midst of his clergy who were as poor as himself. His exemplary life, and his horror of any form of intrigue would probably have protected him from persecution had it not been for traitors among his own people. He was denounced and sold by men who were not only Catholics but priests, and the thought of this treachery must have been the keenest wound in the heart of this good and faithful shepherd. Two friars, having been reproved by him for misconduct, apostatized, and avenged themselves by denouncing him to the government as holding communication with Oates's pretended conspirators. It was at the moment when the public frenzy was at its height and when the slightest and most unfounded pretext sufficed for the ruin of a Papist. Shaftesbury gave a favourable reception to the calumniators, and the archbishop was arrested. He was accused of endeavouring to raise an army of 70,000 men to exterminate the Protestants and give up the chief ports of the country to Spanish and French troops.

After a preliminary interrogation he was sent to England, and there kept in close and solitary confinement for eighteen months. The gaolers only were allowed to enter his cell, and they related that he spent all his time in prayer, that he fasted three or four times a week and that his bearing was always the same, gentle and serene.

On June 8, 1681, he appeared before his judges.

* *History of England*, iii, 631.

He based his defence on his extreme poverty, which made it utterly impossible for him to levy an army. On this point he mentioned with all simplicity how he, the Primate of Ireland, lived in a thatched cottage with one servant only and £60 a year for their maintenance and all his expenses. He pleaded that he had been brought away from a place where his own character, the conduct of his accusers and the state of the country were known, to be tried before men whose ignorance of all these things rendered them incapable of forming a correct judgement of his guilt or innocence. The solemn asseveration of his innocence was the only thing he could now oppose to the oaths of his perjured accusers.

The jury, however, found him guilty ; and when the Earl of Essex solicited his pardon, declaring from his own knowledge that the charge against him could not be true, the king indignantly replied, "Then, my lord, be his blood on your own conscience. You might have saved him if you would. I cannot pardon him because I dare not."

On June 13 the archbishop was condemned to die the death of a traitor. When sentence was pronounced he exclaimed *Deo gratias*. He again protested his innocence, and said that a free pardon had been promised him if he would acknowledge the existence of a plot and reveal its authors ; but he knew of no plot, and besides he added, "I would rather die ten thousand times than rob my neighbour of a farthing of his money, a day of his liberty, or a minute of his life.*

* Challoner, ii, 237.

VIII

Father Corker, S.J. assists the archbishop—The latter praises the English Catholics—His letter to Father Corker—The Earl of Essex in vain intervenes in his favour—The archbishop is taken to execution—His discourse—He is buried near to the five Jesuit fathers—His body is afterwards taken to Lambspring in Germany.

OUR readers will remember that Father Corker,* the Benedictine, after being condemned to death, had his sentence commuted to perpetual imprisonment, remaining at Newgate to the end of the reign of Charles II. His presence in that prison, one of the most horrible prisons in London, was an immense boon to the numbers of Catholics confined there on account of their faith. Active, courageous and devoted, he was like an angel of consolation among them. His charity was especially exerted in regard to the Archbishop of Armagh, who at first might only communicate with him by letters, but after his condemnation was allowed to receive his visits and also those of a great many English Catholics, whose devotedness seems to have touched him profoundly. “The English Catholics,” he wrote to his nephew, Michael Plunkett, “were here most charitable to me; they spared neither money nor gold to relieve me, and in my trial did all for me that even my brother would do. They are rare Catholics and most constant sufferers.”†

* Restored to liberty in 1683 at the accession of James II, Father Corker was chosen in 1693 to be abbot of Lambspring in Germany. Three years later he resigned this dignity and returned to England as a simple missionary. He died in London in 1715, having, it was said, led more than a thousand converts into the Catholic Church.—*Records*, v, 45.

† *Records*, v, 46.

As a priest, Father Corker could do still more, and afford the consolations of religion to the prelate. He also procured him a missal, which he had greatly desired and which he read for hours together, we are told, with great devotion. In a narrative left by Father Corker of the last days of his venerable friend, he speaks with emotion of his cheerfulness, his simplicity and his love of God, and adds that all who came to visit him felt, on seeing him, an ardent desire of suffering for Jesus Christ. This influence was all the stronger from being quite unconscious. In his childlike humility the archbishop complained of his want of fervour and of love of God, and yet, adds Father Corker, this love was strong enough to take away from him all fear of death.

With the same simplicity the archbishop wrote to Father Corker after his condemnation to thank him for all his kindnesses. He expresses his conviction that at the tribunal above he will meet with a different kind of justice from that which here had just been meted out to him ; and continues, "There I shall be sure to have an equitable trial ; I shall have time to call the necessary witnesses, the Judge Himself will summon them, and your prayers and those of your friends will be at that hour my powerful advocates ; for here no advocate was allowed to plead for

"Your affectionate friend,
"OLIVER PLUNKETT."

The execution was fixed for July, 1681. The archbishop slept quietly until four in the morning. When the officers had come for him, and while he was crossing the courtyard of the prison, tranquil and smiling, he turned round and gave a last benediction

to Father Corker and the other Catholic prisoners, who were watching him as long as he was in sight.

On arriving at Tyburn he spoke to the people, and, when alluding to the unworthy men who betrayed him, said that their treachery, though a disgrace to themselves, ought not to bring dishonour on the clergy, for there was a Judas even among the apostles. He forgave them and also his judges who had refused to give time for the arrival of witnesses for his defence. He then prayed for the king. His last prayer was the *Miserere*, and he was still reciting it when the cart was driven from beneath his feet.

Often during his captivity the archbishop spoke of the five Jesuits executed in 1679; he had a great devotion for their memory, rejoiced that he was confined in the same prison, recommended himself to their prayers, and asked that he might be buried at their feet. His friends succeeded in obtaining his remains, and faithful to his wishes, interred them in the churchyard of St Giles-in-the-fields, near to Father Whitbread and his companions. Three years later, Father James Corker, on regaining his freedom, had them transferred to the Abbey of Lambspring.

Challoner tells us that there was a tradition that the martyr's body was found intact.*

Over the tomb the Benedictine father raised a monument, bearing a Latin inscription recording the sufferings and the virtues of the holy Primate of Ireland, so venerable, so humble and so great.

* Challoner, ii, 239. The head of Archbishop Plunkett after being given to Philip, Cardinal Howard, became the property of Archbishop McMahon of Armagh, and was given by him to the Dominicanesses at Drogheda, whose prioress in 1722 was Catherine Plunkett, great-niece of the martyr.

CHAPTER VIII

FUGITIVE AND IMPRISONED PRIESTS

I

State of the prisons in the seventeenth century—Richard Lacy—The York prisoners—Demeanour of the priests—Their apostolate in the prisons—Letters of the prisoners.

BESIDE the martyrs of every condition of life who, in the reign of Charles II, perished on the gibbet or the block, victims of the people's bigotry and the cowardice of the king, we have the more obscure but no less admirable army of those who, for the same cause, their faith, suffered proscription, imprisonment and exile, being “destitute, afflicted, tormented,” through a period often extending over many years.

It is difficult to us at the present day to realize what was the frightful state of English prisons in the seventeenth century, and indeed until a much more recent date. They were, for the most part, dark and noisome dungeons, where want of air and the intolerable stench often caused death.

An aged Jesuit, a man of great learning and worth, Father Lacey (*verè Prince*),* on Oates's accusation, was thrown into Newgate, a horrible and infamous prison; he remained there for five months, all access to him being denied, even to the medical

* *Records*, v, 258-9.

attendant of the gaol, while he lay sick with fever until the ruin of his health had rendered him utterly helpless. At length, the very day before his death, the medical officer being then called in for the first time and failing by every effort to induce the dying father to take the prescribed medicine, took a glass of beer in his hands, pledged the king's health, and invited the father to respond to the toast with the glass of physic. The delirious patient, upon the mention of the king's name, instantly raised himself and said : "If the king's health is to be drunk, here it is," and swallowed the nauseous dose to the very dregs. The doctor, on seeing this, exclaimed : "And am I to believe that these men are conspirators against the king's life, who even in delirium will for love of him do an act so repugnant? I would sooner believe that all of us Protestants are conspirators and traitors!" What Father Lacey had to sustain in the most severe sufferings, we learn from witnesses of character and credit who were present at his death. He bore his imprisonment with invincible patience in a very narrow, filthy and offensive cell, all the more horrid by its dim light and the absence of all conveniences. He was left in a cold winter without fire, and wretchedly supplied with food and clothing. Yet, "Great as his sufferings have been," wrote Father Petre, "God abundantly compensated for them all by his divine consolations he seemed as it were melted with heavenly joy, and the bystanders experienced incredible consolation. These facts I write, having been present." *

* *Records*, v, 260,

The prisons of York were full of Catholics, some of whom were kept in prison for five, ten, twenty and even twenty-eight years. They suffered cruelly from hunger, being allowed but one meal a day, and this they were obliged to pay for. We may imagine the misery of those, and they were by far the larger number, who having no private means of their own had to depend on casual assistance from without or on the good pleasure of the gaoler. This functionary was too often a tyrant who pitilessly fleeced the prisoners, and loaded them with irons if they dared to complain. "It is impossible," writes Canon Raine,* "to condemn too strongly the state of the northern prisons and the conduct of the gaolers."

To these material sufferings mental tortures were most frequently added. The prisoners, especially those arrested upon the denunciations of Oates, were generally kept in the most rigorous solitary confinement. Accused of an odious crime and deprived of all external communications, they had no means of preparing their defence. But amidst all this cruel injustice the patience and constancy of the Catholic prisoners were heroic, exciting, as we have seen, the wonder of their keepers.†

Sometimes their souls were strengthened by an unexpected consolation; thus, certain priests imprisoned in Newgate found means to celebrate holy mass in their dungeon, and even, by a small opening made in the partition wall, to administer holy communion to the lay prisoners confined in the cell next to their own. Their time was spent in prayer and meditation,

* Preface to *York Castle Depositions*, Surtees Society, xi, 1861.

† See *Records*, v, 34.

in singing the hymns of the Church, or, when able to procure books, in spiritual reading.

The Catholic prisoners were usually more occupied in thinking of their proscribed and suffering brethren outside the prison walls than of their own troubles. Thus one who had been already two months in prison wrote: "God, during this time of affliction, pours out upon us His consolation with a liberal rather than with a sparing hand. . . . This experience renders me solicitous for my companions, associates in the same evils who are yet at large. Nor do I doubt that the same divine bounty will temper their bitter chalice with the sweetness of His benediction." *

The imprisoned priests were sometimes permitted to receive visitors from without; but this was rarely allowed until after their condemnation, up to which time they were usually kept in solitary and close confinement. Once the permission was given, visitors came in great numbers—not only the Catholics, longing to converse with their martyrs, but many Protestants also; some out of curiosity, others with a sincere desire of information or instruction. Persons would often come, in spite of the difficulties of travelling in those days, from the remote parts of the country solely in order to speak with the imprisoned priests on matters of religion. In this manner countless souls were won to the true faith, and the prisoners found their days too short to receive those desiring to see them. One of them, in writing to his superior, says: "It is now six o'clock in the evening, and I have not yet in the course of the whole day found time to eat. O blessed captivity which allows us to

* *Records*, v, 35.

gather so plentiful a harvest into the granary of the Catholic Church ! No one can so freely work for God as those who are prisoners. If we were free, people would be afraid to come to us for fear of compromising themselves or of endangering our hosts. Our enemies think to harm us, and God turns the harm into good." It sometimes, but rarely, happened that several priests were put together in the same cell, when they made for themselves a rule of life as for a religious community, and observed it with great exactness.

The captivity of these generous confessors was often protracted through many years. Father John Penketh, a Jesuit missionary in Lancashire, was imprisoned for six years in a most confined cell so constructed as not to admit of a fire, though the cold in that part of the country is often intense. By his patience, gentleness and affable demeanour he soon gained the hearts of his keepers, especially of the gaoler. Leave was given him to celebrate holy mass daily, and many from every part of the country came to him for confession and counsel without hindrance from the Protestants, so great was the influence of the father's sanctity upon all.*

The letters written by the captive priests reflect the angelic sweetness which in some cases extinguished hatred and dispelled prejudice. Father George Busby, imprisoned solely for the crime of priesthood, wrote to his provincial, Father Warner, from Derby gaol in 1681: "I never enjoyed such good health on the mission as I have since my committal to prison. . . . My greatest consolation after God is to think of my brethren, representing them as

* *Records*, iv, 333.

present . . . and uniting in their pious conversation. The prison is my college, my fellow-captives my colleagues. . . . O my God, when shall I be allowed to enjoy the society of my fellow-religious? But if not permitted in time, at least may I do so in eternity. O blissful eternity! how sweet is the thought of thee to those who suffer in a good cause! This makes the time of captivity appear short, and changes the bitterness of a prison into sweetness; for, although the body is immured within narrow walls, the soul knows no bounds, but soars above time and space, fixing the eyes upon its future immortality." Again in January, 1682, "I abound in joy amidst all tribulation, I fancy myself a tree planted by the divine hand upon the banks of the Derwent (the river which washes the prison walls of Derby), bearing fruit in time that will abide for eternity, fruit that will never decay."* "Thus," writes another father, "did this nightingale sweetly and incessantly sing from his cage, charming the ears of those present and the souls of the absent, raising them upwards to God, the sole source of his melodious strains."†



II

Henry Starkey—Franciscans who died in prison—Benedictines.

AMONGST these prisoners, numbers of whom consummated their sacrifice in obscurity, we find secular priests and members of the principal religious orders.

Challoner, the faithful historian of our English martyrs who collected his documents at a time when

* *Records*, v, 502, 503. † *Ibid.*

they were still a living memory to his contemporaries, has preserved most of the names of priests arrested, judged and imprisoned under Charles II. With regard to some of these, details are lacking, either because they died in prison or because they "survived the tempest," to use Challoner's own words. Some, however, are distinguished by a characteristic trait which gives to each a marked personality. Such an one is Henry Starkey, who fought under the royal standard in the civil wars. He sacrificed all his fortune in the royal cause, and had one of his legs taken off by a cannon-ball. He went abroad, and after completing his studies was, by a very rare exception, ordained priest, in spite of his mutilated limb. Returning to England as a missionary he was arrested and sentenced to die. But, either from shame or fear to send to the gallows and quartering-block this brave man who had sacrificed so much in the cause of the king, the sentence was commuted.

Among the Franciscans arrested and judged was Francis Levison, who was known in his order as Ignatius de Santa Clara and who had administered the last sacraments to his brother in religion, the martyr, John Wall. He was kept in close imprisonment at Worcester, in solitary confinement and in want of the very necessaries of life, dying thus at the age of thirty-four, February 11, 1680. Another Franciscan, Father Charles Parry, brought to the bar of the Old Bailey, January 17, 1679, on hearing his sentence of death exclaimed, *Te Deum laudamus!* But the execution having been postponed, he died in prison. Several other Franciscans, Fathers Langworth,

Nappier and Jones, remained in prison until the accession of James II in 1685.*

A certain number of Benedictines also died in prison. One of these, Dom Placid Adelham, a man of study and of prayer and an ardent admirer of St Augustine, exchanged his tranquil cell in the monastery at Paris, of which he was a monk, to go on the English mission, and, being arrested, to suffer the horrors of a dungeon in one of the London prisons, where he died. One of his brothers in religion, Father Constable, also died of his imprisonment at Durham in 1683. Father Wall, brother of John, the Franciscan martyr, on being brought to the bar as a conspirator, defended himself with so much courage and ability that, marvellous to relate, he was declared innocent of the crime of *lèse-majesté*. Lastly the Benedictine father, John Huddleston, who, as the chaplain of Mr Thomas Whitgreave, had helped in receiving, tending and concealing the fugitive king at Moseley Hall after the battle of Worcester, had particular relations with the king, which, throughout the storm of persecution raised by the perjuries of Oates, preserved him from danger.

Charles II, so frequently unmindful of past services, never forgot those rendered him by Father Huddleston in his hour of greatest need. He exempted the Huddleston family from the obligation of paying the crushing fines imposed on Catholics for their religion. By a mysterious coincidence the religious who had helped to save his king in the days of his youth, was

* Challoner, ii, 227; *Franciscan Martyrs in England*, by Mrs Hope
241-243.

to render him a far more important service at the hour of death.*



III

Jesuits who died in prison—Fathers Jenison and Atkins—Thomas Wilkinson—Richard Prince—Fathers Cotton and Evans killed by the priest-hunters.

OF the Society of Jesus there were, besides its martyrs executed at Tyburn, fifteen confessors in prison, very few of whom outlived the storm.

Amongst those who died in prison was Father Jenison, thrown into a dungeon of Newgate in 1679. The physical sufferings he endured were surpassed by the mental anguish caused by hearing that his father, brother and one of his sisters, and a lax priest who was his father's chaplain, had apostatized to save themselves from a like fate. Nor do we know whether the earnest letters he lost no opportunity of writing to them from his dungeon produced any effect. Meanwhile our Lord filled him with spiritual consolation

* *Records*, v, 583. Father John Huddleston died in London in 1698 at the age of ninety. His family had already, before the reign of Charles II, given splendid proofs of loyalty and devotion to the royal cause. In 1553, on the evening of July 7, the Princess Mary Tudor suddenly arrived at Sawston Hall, the mansion of Sir John Huddleston, on her way to London on the death of Edward VI, and thus escaped a plot formed by the Dudleys to ensnare and seize her person. At dawn next day the princess heard mass, and then for greater disguise mounted on a pillion behind Sir John and pursued her perilous journey into Suffolk. She had not long started when a Protestant mob from Cambridge invaded and pillaged the house and set fire to it, Sir John and the princess beholding the conflagration from a distance. "Never mind, Sir John," she said; "if I am queen, you shall have a better house." And she kept her word.

and joy, so that he would often in the fervour of his heart break forth into glad ejaculations, such as, "Oh, how sweet it is to suffer for Christ!" At the end of a year his constitution sank beneath the severity of his close confinement and insufficient food, and he died on September 27, 1679, at the early age of thirty-six, having been sixteen years in religion.

Another victim of "that incredible popular delusion, Oates's plot," was the venerable Jesuit Father William Atkins. Neither extreme old age nor his utterly helpless condition could avail as a plea on his behalf. Having had to give up active work on the mission he retired to Wolverhampton, where he lay for six years completely paralysed, bedridden, quite deaf and nearly speechless. He was charged with high treason in exciting the people to rebellion. The brutal pursuivants dragged him from his bed in an upper storey of the house, and, forcing him into a most incommodious vehicle, carried him off to Stafford gaol, eleven miles distant. He was carried to court at the assizes, and condemned to death on account of his priesthood. When, by dint of shouting in his ear, his interpreter succeeded in informing him that, being a priest, he was sentenced to die the death of a traitor, he received the tidings with incredible joy, and, summoning all the strength he was able, said distinctly, "Most noble Lord Judge, I return you my warmest thanks."

To his great sorrow he was afterwards reprieved, the authorities doubtless fearing the odium and disgrace they would incur in putting to death one so aged and infirm. He was, however, remanded to prison, where he survived only a short time, mourning

that the time of his sojourning was prolonged. He sweetly fell asleep in our Lord on March 17, 1681, in Stafford gaol, most truly a martyr in will if not in deed.*

The death of another Jesuit, Father Thomas Wilkinson, was more tragic. He was in prison at Morpeth, when a violent hurricane blew down a large portion of the building. The other prisoners, rogues and vagabonds of the lowest class, all took advantage of the confusion to escape; Father Wilkinson alone, notwithstanding the severity of his sufferings and the squalor of his cell, remained, considering it more consistent for him to endure these grievances for the name of Jesus than to seek safety by even a lawful flight. Next day he voluntarily gave himself up to the authorities, a proof of his conscious innocence, but was a second time committed to prison. When brought before the tribunal there was no evidence upon which to convict him; he was, nevertheless, contrary to all justice, again remanded to await the next assizes. Meantime he fell ill, and asked that a medical man should be called. A surgeon was immediately brought in, a man of no reputation, and a sworn enemy to the Catholics and especially to Jesuits. After feeling his pulse he is reported to have said that he would give him a speedy release from all his pains. He then instead of medicine gave him a dose of poison, which in a few hours did its work. The truth of this occurrence was so well attested and notorious that his enemies, unable to deny it, gave out that the prisoner had purposely poisoned himself, and buried him under a dunghill as a suicide. William Riddell, a young man belonging to an old Catholic family in the north,

* *Records*, v, 451, 452.

was one who saw the father's remains thus dishonourably interred ; he also relates that nearly ten years after, on the body being dug up, it was found perfectly incorrupt, white and flexible as that of a living person. Not many weeks after Father Wilkinson's death, the surgeon who had caused it killed himself in a fit of remorse and despair.

Father Edward Turner, brother of the martyr Anthony Turner, also died in prison in 1681. Father Hunter, aged 78, remained four years in prison and died in 1684. When sentenced to death he exclaimed, *Sit nomen Domini benedictum in sæcula !* Then perceiving that among the malefactors condemned with him were two Catholics he went to them, and there, in view of the judges and surrounded by Protestants, he managed to bring them to repentance and to confess and absolve them both.

Priests were liable to be treated with great brutality by the pursuivants. Father Cotton, who was 84 years of age and had laboured for fifty years in Wales, was seized in the attic of a mansion belonging to a Catholic gentleman, and was thrown down on the stairs by these men with such violence that he lost consciousness and died in a few days.

Father Humphrey Evans, aged 83, had served Holywell and the neighbourhood for many years. The many dangers and sufferings he had to encounter brought on paralysis in his old age, so that he was helpless and bedridden. Nevertheless, he was charged with supporting the pretended plot ; and a body of pursuivants, sent by the Privy Council, attacked Poole Hall, Cheshire, the house in which he resided, forced the doors, searched the hiding-places and rushed into

the room of the aged father, whom they dragged out of bed, beating him with their fists and threatening to shoot him with their muskets, whilst he, in a scarcely articulate voice, kept repeating with great joy and courage, *Fiat voluntas tua!* Finally, the officers, having ill-treated the family for many hours, bound over Sir James Poole, under heavy penalties, to produce the father when summoned. He died a few weeks afterwards, January 14, 1679, at Poole Hall. It was noticed that when he was dying the bell of the chapel began to ring of its own accord, and so continued to ring "about the space of a *Miserere*," and the same thing occurred at his burial.*



IV

The hiding-places—Sufferings of the proscribed—Father Pritchard—Anecdotes and traditions.

IF the life of the imprisoned priests was hard and painful in their noisome cells, that of the proscribed missionaries wandering or concealed about the country was equally hard in other ways. In constant danger, they were compelled to be night and day on the alert, and to take endless precautions, not only to escape discovery, but to avoid compromising any Catholics or other charitable persons who might dare to give them food or shelter.

The hiding-places which, ever since the time of Elizabeth the Catholic gentry had had constructed in their dwellings, saved the lives of many priests. The existence of these hiding-places in the house was carefully kept secret by the master and mistress. They

* *Records*, v, 937.

were contrived with great skill, and often baffled all the ingenuity of the pursuivants to discover them. Even to this day they are to be seen in many an old mansion in all parts of England, silent but eloquent witnesses to the pertinacious persecution of the adherents of the old faith by the professors of the new religion, which, of late years, has shown a singular anxiety to claim continuity with that which it left no means untried to destroy.

At Lydiate Hall, in Lancashire, were several hiding-places. In one of these, discovered in 1863, were found a few chicken bones, the remains of the last meal of some fugitive priest. In a farm house in the neighbourhood another hiding-place was found, in which were a chair and a book, the *Horæ Diurnæ*. A pewter chalice and paten belonging to the times of persecution are still preserved at the hall.

At Oxburgh, the home of the Bedingfields, a hiding-place is hollowed out of the thickness of a wall, and is entered by a trap-door. At Coughton, belonging to the Throckmortons, are several of these hiding-places, in one of which an altar-stone was found ; there was one at Sawston Hall large enough to contain a chair and a table, but by far the larger number of these places had but just room enough to receive a man. At the old presbytery of West Grinstead in Sussex—given to the mission by the Carylls, who owned all the surrounding property for miles until they were ruined by fines and confiscations as “recusants”—there are no less than four hiding-places, two of which, one above the other, are narrow holes scarcely tall enough to stand upright in, contrived in the wall of one of the main chimneys ; a third being low, long and narrow,

close under a portion of the roof. A small silver chalice and paten with a few other most interesting relics of the penal times are still preserved in the sacristy. Amongst them is a letter to his superior from the Franciscan, Father Bell, written from prison two days before his martyrdom at Tyburn. He had served that mission and was there arrested.

In these narrow hiding-places the priest often had to spend days or weeks or even months, and almost always in solitude, the one or two persons who knew the secret of his presence being obliged to observe the utmost precaution in visiting their proscribed guest for fear of attracting attention to their movements.

The priest-hunting which had been so active under Elizabeth was no less so under Charles II, after the calumnies of Oates had set loose a fresh storm of bigotry and violence. The history of the time furnishes innumerable incidents which enable us to realize in some degree the reign of terror under which Catholic priests and laymen lived.

Father Charles Pritchard, a Welsh Jesuit, spent six months in a close and narrow room, the secret of his presence being entrusted by his host to only one or two confidential servants, and it was only at night that he could ever venture out to minister to the needs of the faithful in that part of the country. On one of these charitable missions in that wild and rocky region he missed his footing in the darkness, and had so severe a fall that he soon after died of his injuries. He was secretly buried in a garden, otherwise his host would have incurred confiscation and death for harbouring a priest.

Father Charles Poulton, who, during a missionary

career of thirty years had endeared himself to all who knew him by his disinterested zeal, meekness and charity,* was a great sufferer during the Oates's persecution, being hunted up and down the country like a wild beast, and during eighteen months spending his days and nights in the woods, stealing out in the darkness to visit the afflicted Catholics, and never venturing to return to the same house a second time.

At Boscobel, the pursuivants having some clue to a priest hiding in the woods, spread nets and let loose bloodhounds in order to make sure of their prey. However, he escaped for that time, favoured by the approach of night.

Often, indeed, it seemed as if the special protection of God was over His servants, and, in regard to this, the incidents related and preserved in family traditions are fragrant with the perfume of simple faith and bring vividly before us the experiences of those sad times.

The following account† is from an old MS. preserved at St Scholastica's Abbey, Teignmouth. "Edward Paston, Esq., of Thorpe in Norfolk, had a house, distant about half a mile from where he lived, which stood alone in a wood and was moated round about. It was, therefore, settled that it should be used for entertaining priests, and a Catholic gentleman undertook to live in it to receive them. Whilst he was there, it happened that the pursuivants came on a sudden, and the gentleman bade them show their commission, and kept them in talk some

* He was one of the nine sons of John Poulton, Esq., of Desborough, and Francis his wife. He and four of his brothers entered the Society of Jesus. *Records*, v, 307.

† Quoted in *Records*, v, 530.

time, during which the priest and the Church stuff were put safe into the hiding-place, so that the searchers coming in found nothing. But they had brought with them a dog of the bloodhound kind, and he stood sniffing about the secret place where the priest was hid. Before the men, however, espied him up came a great cat and fell a-fighting with the dog, never once leaving him until the pursuivants, returning sorely vexed because their searching through the house had been of no avail, called him off and went their way; and truly it seemed a wonderful thing that the cat was not afeared to set upon such a great dog, but by this means did our Lord deliver that house."

Another anecdote of the same kind has a Welsh missionary for its hero. The house which sheltered him was suddenly invaded by a party of the priest-hunters while he was quietly walking in the court or quadrangle round which the mansion was built. Flight being impossible, he boldly went up to them and asked what they wanted. "We are come for the priest who is hiding here." Whereupon the missionary obligingly offered to help them to look for him, showed them into every room from garret to cellar, all of which they overturned, searching every corner and cupboard without success until, tired out, they refreshed themselves and departed. The father, foreseeing that they might return, then let himself out by a postern gate and escaped, just in time; for, one of the pursuivants suddenly suggesting that the courteous gentleman might have been the priest himself, they hastened back, only to find him flown; nor did they succeed in effecting his capture.

The remarkable escape of Father Waldegrave, a Jesuit missionary residing at Lydiate Hall, at the outburst of Oates's plot, is still a living memory in Lancashire. Although informed that certain men had agreed to way-lay and murder him, yet, having to visit a dying man, he made no hesitation, but rode boldly forward in company with his servant. The men had planted themselves in each of the three roads by one of which the father must return that night. When he had arrived at a narrow and dangerous spot he bade his servant to follow behind. One of the assassins, armed with a heavy bludgeon, perceiving the father approach on horseback, raised it with the full intention of felling him to the ground; but his arm remained powerless and himself motionless, nor was he able to stir from the place until Father Waldegrave had proceeded quietly and securely on his journey. The man himself disclosed the fact, and ascribed the father's preservation to Jesuitical witchcraft.* There is also a tradition at Lydiate that one of the men was converted, seeing in the father's remarkable escape an evident sign of heavenly protection.



V

Burial of the proscribed priests—Catholic cemetery of Hardkirk—Precautions taken by the missionaries.

THE death and burial of the proscribed priests was attended with the same difficulties as their lives. When they died in the narrow hiding-places where they had received shelter, unknown to all but one or two persons, it was equally necessary that the secret of

* *Records*, v, 385, also note same page.

their presence, living or dead, should be kept, so that their hosts or friends should not be exposed to inevitable imprisonment and death.

Father Pritchard, as we have seen, was buried in a garden ; Father Curry,* who died in London at an earlier period, under Elizabeth, in the cellars of the house where he was concealed. And when in 1825 repairs were being made in an old mission-house in Durham an arched vault was discovered under the floor of a back parlour, and beneath it appeared two or three coffins, doubtless those of missionary priests secretly buried in the times of persecution.

Father Andrews, *alias* Price, was buried in a barn that had formerly been a chapel near Raglan. Some Protestants in the neighbourhood having heard a rumour of the matter, "The justice," writes one Protestant, signing himself J.B., to another, "ordered the place to be searched, and then they found the corpse, newly buried ; he had no coffin, only a sheet wrapped round him with a cross made of wax on his stomach, with several beads, crucifixes and other Romish fopperies about him."† The justice also endeavoured to discover the Catholics who had buried him, but without success.

Within the walls of his park at Little Crosbie, Lancashire, Mr William Blundell enclosed a spot called Hardkirke for the burial of such Catholic recusants as died either in the said village or such of the neighbourhood as should be denied burial at their parish church of Sephton. From records of proceedings in the Star Chamber it appears that in 1611 Mr Blundell's act of charity brought upon him a heavy

* *Records*, v, 651, note. † *Records*, v, 904.

penalty. "And the defendant, Blundell, being a popish recusant convict, enclosed a piece of ground, etc., and used the same for the space of ten years for the burial of popish recusants and seminary priests, and for these offences two of the rioters were fined £500 apiece, and three others £100 apiece, and Blundell, for procurement of the riots and erecting the churchyard, £2,000. All committed to the Fleet prison, and the walls and mounds of the churchyard to be pulled down and the ground laid waste by decree to be read at the assizes."* This infamous Act, we are told, was performed by a posse of constables amid the sound of trumpets.

The riots, which brought Mr Blundell before that arbitrary tribunal, the Star Chamber, were some resistance to the sheriff. The plot of ground was restored to its use as a cemetery for Catholics from 1613 to 1753, and many missionary priests are buried there. The site is marked by a cross erected by Colonel Blundell.

Among the many precautions which priests in England were obliged to take in all the circumstances of their life, such as secular garb and borrowed names, we find in their account books which have come down to us some of the ambiguous formularies in use to ward off the ever-alert suspicions of their enemies. The missionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries speak of "my shop" when they mean their chapel. The Durham district is mentioned as "Madam Durham," and that of South Wales as "My Lady South Wales"; whilst the number of their parishioners

* Baines' *Lancashire*, ii, 396, quoted in *Records*, v, 344, 345.

is given as "five hundred customers" who "visit my shop." The Jesuit residence is "the factory."*



VI

Divergent opinions in regard to the oath of allegiance—Rome condemns the oath—Some priests authorize it—Cause of this error—The religious are opposed to the oath—Opinion of the Benedictines and Jesuits—Apostate priests—Few in number.

UNFORTUNATELY, it was not from their enemies that the worst difficulties of the proscribed priests arose. At a time when a perfect understanding among the soldiers of the same cause was pre-eminently necessary, there arose a serious divergence of opinion in regard to the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. It is not surprising that such should have been the case, when we reflect that the heat of the persecution, which obliged the priests to hide in one place and another, sometimes for years together, made it impossible for them to meet together from time to time to take counsel on the many difficult questions arising from the state of the times and the absence in England of a responsible head.

The oaths demanded under Elizabeth and James I did not simply contain an acknowledgement of the royal authority of the sovereign, which would have been perfectly legitimate and praiseworthy; but also a declaration of his spiritual supremacy as head of the Church, and this the Catholic theologians rightly condemned.

Still, the formula of the oath being somewhat ambiguous and the consequences of refusal so terrible

* *Records*, v, 667.

and crushing, it is not to be wondered at that among the English Catholics themselves there arose eager discussions as to its being permissible or not. Under James I the arch-priest of England, Blackwell, took the oath of allegiance, and then retracted. Under Charles II the same controversies were renewed, although, in condemning the formula employed, the sovereign pontiffs had, it seemed, definitively settled the question.

These recurring discussions on the part of a certain number of English priests arose from no rebellious spirit nor from any wish to make terms with heresy and schism; their error was solely caused by their immense pity for the frightful sufferings of their people. Their charitable tears dimmed as it were their clear discernment of the steep and rugged path of obedience and truth, and they were tempted to forget its claims in remembering its cost.

In general, all the religious pronounced against the lawfulness of the oath. The English Benedictines of Paris, assembled in chapter in August, 1681, sent energetic resolutions on the subject to the provincial of the English Jesuits, Father Keynes, then at Rome. In the letter accompanying this document the superior of the Benedictines gives us an insight into the divisions produced by this question in the persecuted Church. He says that he and his monks have brought on themselves much ill-will by their firmness in denouncing the oath and defending the power and authority of the Holy See. If this be a vice, he adds, their order hath been guilty of it from the beginning. He therefore requests Father Keynes to supplicate the Holy Father from them that some remedy might be

taken for preventing the many disorders, scandals and schisms caused in England by some of the clergy who encourage English Catholics to take the oath. He assures him that a third at least of the Catholics are against doing so, and that many were then in prison and had suffered much for refusing it; others had been persuaded that the pope had granted a tacit leave to do so, because he had set forth no formal declaration to forbid it. All the missionaries in England, except one party, were absolutely against it.*

The Jesuits, to whom the Benedictines addressed this pressing appeal, were entirely at one with them in their views on this burning question. A great number of letters and memoranda are still in existence which they wrote to prove the schismatical character of the oath. Their opinions in regard to it were so decided that their superiors, while approving them, yet felt it sometimes incumbent on them to moderate the expression of their zeal, and in particular forbade their provoking public discussions on the subject of the oath.†

But while the divergency of opinion we have recorded was a very real trial to the missionaries, a far more grievous cross was theirs in the apostasy of a certain number of priests. The fall of these unhappy men was to their sacerdotal brethren the most poignant affliction. Moreover, these apostates, desirous of giving pledges of their zeal, usually denounced and betrayed those whose labours they had shared. Two such, John Sergent and David Maurice,

* *Records*, v, 81. The original of this letter is in the *Collectio Cardwelli*, in the archives of Brussels.

† *Records*, v, 641.

became paid spies of the government, from which they received considerable sums of money. Father Gavan, the martyr, was one of their special objects of hatred. It must, however, be added that the accusations brought by these wretched men, although too often acted on, were not believed in, and that the king publicly showed his contempt for renegades of this description.

But in spite of these defections, which after all were very few in number, it may truly be affirmed that the priests, both secular and regular, exposed as they were to countless difficulties and dangers, were, as a rule, admirable in fidelity to their duty and in generous self-devotion.

CHAPTER IX

THE CATHOLIC LAITY

I

Admirable demeanour of the Catholic laity—Examples: Weld, Gerard, Caryll—Domiciliary visits—Courage of the Catholic gentry—Christopher Turberville and Father Evans.

As we have seen, all the records and traditions of the time, whether private or official, whether the narrative of friends or the darkened and prejudiced account given by their adversaries, unite in showing how admirable was the attitude of the Catholic priests, both secular and regular, under their long and cruel sufferings. Nor did the Catholic laity show less courage than the shepherds of the flock. Gentlemen and artisans, peers of the realm and commoners, youths and aged men, all, with very few exceptions, rose to the high level of faith and endurance required by the circumstances of the time, and in the midst of exceptional trials gave proof of extraordinary firmness and fortitude.

Besides laymen of note, such as Richard Langhorne, Lords Stafford, Arundel and Petre and others, who by reason of their birth, functions or particular details of their trial, are in the foremost rank of our martyrs and confessors, we have also to remember the multitude of obscurer Catholics who, in

a humbler or less public sphere, endured sufferings no less cruel and unjust. For instance, Humphrey Weld, Esq., of Lulworth Castle, is thus referred to in the entries of March 27, 1679, of the journals of the Lords: that “being represented under such circumstances as render him suspected to be popishly affected, if not a papist . . . he be put out of the commission of the peace, and removed from being a deputy lieutenant, and put from the government of Portland Castle; and that his own castle, called Lulworth, be searched for arms.” All of which was done, although the arms found by the searchers were so few that they were allowed to remain. Again, Richard Gerard, a gentleman who, like Mr Weld, belonged to a family always faithful to the old religion, was seized and thrown into one of the dungeons of Newgate, where he died of gaol fever in 1679. He was accused of complicity in the pretended plot, but his real crime was that of being a well-known Catholic, a friend of the Jesuits, and that three of his sons were at the College of St Omers. His frank and firm answers before the tribunal plainly proved his innocence of any tampering with treason. Far from concealing his friendship with the Jesuits, he told how he had dined with several of them, among whom was Father Gavan the martyr, at Boscobel, and that they drank the king’s health.*

John Caryll, who had sacrificed nearly all his fortune in the service of the king and his father, was none the less compelled every year to pay heavy fines from the residue, as only thus could he escape imprisonment.†

* *Records*, v, 260, 435.

† *West Grinstead et les Caryll*, par Max de Trenqualeon, i, 449.

The same John Caryll, when a young man, had on one single occasion consented to show himself at the Protestant church, in order to avoid the repeated fines which were reducing him to poverty. This one act of weakness he atoned for by long years of repentance, during which he seems to have risen to a really eminent degree of sanctity. He was an unfailing friend to the proscribed and hunted priests, the protector and support of the poor and oppressed Catholics, repeatedly paying their fines in addition to his own. When on his death-bed, he gave to his wife and children rings engraved with the words which were the subject of his constant meditations, "Death, Judgement, Hell, Heaven." He died on August 15, 1681, and it is a tradition in the neighbourhood that at the moment of his death many of the peasants living near saw a splendid and mysterious light shining above the mansion.

The perquisitions directed against landed proprietors who were Catholics were incessant, but the danger to which they exposed themselves by sheltering under their roof a hunted missionary priest rarely deterred them from this act of charity. Father Philip Evans, Jesuit and martyr, was arrested in the house of a Catholic gentleman, Christopher Turberville of Skere. This brave man insisted on accompanying the father when led away to prison at Cardiff; and there his good offices obtained for the captive a companion in his imprisonment, a secular priest apprehended for the same cause and who afterwards shared his crown. On the morning of his execution, Father Evans wrote Mr Turberville a letter full of grateful affection, recalling the memory of their happy conversations in the past,

and adding in conclusion, “Just this afternoon we are going to execution. No man can express the happiness to suffer death for God’s sake, and therefore I am confident that you and your worthy family will rather rejoice than lament. Be assured that when I shall come to the tribunal of Almighty God, you and your family, unto whom thanks for all favours, shall not want a friendly soul.”*

When, that same day, Father Evans and his fellow-priest, John Lloyd, were taken to the gallows, a number of Catholics left the crowd, and went to kneel down by the two priests; thus in the face of all showing their contempt of danger and their esteem for those who were about to suffer death.

Moreover, the faithful were so well known that there was no need for attempting to conceal their belief. From the beginning of the persecution lists of all the Catholics were drawn up in every county of the kingdom, and from that time forward they were overwhelmed with fines and imposts, and subjected to domiciliary visits on the smallest pretext and at any moment, day or night. We have already mentioned that for absenting themselves from the protestantized parish church they were fined £20 a month, and, when unable to pay, two thirds of all their goods were confiscated to the crown. A recent publication † shows us that these crushing penalties were exacted of the poor as well as the rich or those in easy circumstances. In the list of Papists of the county of Hampshire alone, who were thus fined for conscience’

* Quoted in *Records*, v, 889.

† *Hampshire Recusants*, by Dom Aidan Gasquet, O.S.B. Hodges, London, 1896.

sake, we find shoemakers, millers, tailors, small farmers, fishermen and others: poor people, whose furniture, tools and often their humble homes were seized and sold. From 1583 to 1602, a period of nineteen years, the English Catholics paid in fines £120,000 into the royal treasury, the value of money being then about ten times what it is now.

Hence it is easy to understand how it was that Sir Ralph Babthorpe, for instance, a wealthy landed proprietor of Yorkshire and the owner of several country mansions, was so impoverished before he died that he had scarcely enough money to pay his one remaining servant; and that, when the period of persecution ended, the old families who had remained faithful were well-nigh ruined.

Catholics of humbler condition, moreover, were harrassed by spies and informers, paid functionaries for the most part who tried to extort from them evidence against priests. We find an example of this kind in the life of Father Evans. His enemies being unable to find any witness who could or would affirm that the prisoner had exercised his priestly office—to do so constituting in itself the crime of high treason—seized a poor Catholic and tried to force him to make some compromising avowal against their victim. But the man firmly refused, and, in consequence, was cruelly beaten. Two women, less courageous, were intimidated into owning that they had seen the accused celebrate holy mass. It was on this evidence that Father Evans was condemned. “If you believe the evidence of the women,” said Justice Logher to the jury, “you ought to find a verdict of guilty on the capital charge of the priesthood.” And they did so at

once,* without even withdrawing to consider their verdict.



II

Heavy trials of Sir Thomas Gascoigne—His great virtues—His children—His foundation—His trial in London—He is acquitted—His retirement—Lady Tempest.

IN the north these incessant persecutions, from which no Catholic home was ever safe, were even more cruel than elsewhere. We will cite as an example the trials of Sir Thomas Gascoigne, who was distinguished not only by his position, but still more so for his nobility of character, munificence and piety. He may truly be said to have lived from the cradle to the tomb in the shadow of the cross. We learn from contemporary documents that he was secretly baptized by some proscribed priest, as were also his brothers and sisters. His parents, Sir John Gascoigne and Anne Ingleby, had suffered courageously for the truth, and transmitted to their children brave hearts with an unsullied name. These children, brought up amid continual surprises and alarms, accustomed to see fidelity to the old religion regarded as the first of duties, all grew up admirable Christians, worthy of their parents and their training. Thomas was the eldest son, then came John and Michael, both Benedictines; Francis, a secular priest, and six daughters, one of whom died in childhood, two were Benedictine nuns at Cambrai, and three married. One of these, Anne, married to George Thwing, a Yorkshire gentleman, was the mother of Thomas Thwing, the last priest put to death in England.

* *Records*, v, 885.

Thomas, who became head of the family on his father's death, continued the traditions of his race by marrying an excellent Catholic, Anne Simonds. She died leaving him a widower with ten children. Barnbow Hall, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where he lived, was a place of meeting and of refuge for the Catholics of the north, the hospitality and generosity of Sir Thomas being inexhaustible. We are told that he had a particular devotion to the sacred passion of our Lord, and that in his youth he had gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. His intense love of our crucified Redeemer made him most compassionate and helpful to all in need of succour.*

It is not surprising that the children of such a father should themselves also have been faithful and devoted Catholics. Two of the five daughters joined their aunts among the English Benedictines at Cambrai, the rest married. The husband of one of these, Thomas Appleby, resembled his father-in-law in his great compassion for the poorer Catholics who were crushed by the penal laws. He would let to them houses and farms, saying that they were not to pay him rent for them until they could do so without any inconvenience. The beneficence of Sir Thomas Gascoigne reached still farther. He earnestly desired to establish a religious house in Yorkshire where Catholic girls of good position could receive the Christian education which they were obliged to cross the channel to obtain. Such an enterprise, under the

* Howell (*State Trials*) says that Sir Thomas, of the ancient family of Barnbow Hall, lived in great credit in his neighbourhood, and his peaceful behaviour endeared him to persons of all persuasions. Quoted in *Records*, v, 753.

penal laws, was indeed a bold one ; but, in concert with some other leading Catholics of the county, Sir Thomas acquired a house called Dolebank, near Ripley, and entrusted the management of it to the “ English virgins.”

We have elsewhere * related the foundation of this congregation, which, under the name of “ The Institute of Mary,” possesses numerous houses in all parts of the Catholic world. Its foundress, Mary Ward, was a native of Yorkshire, and her first daughters were connected with the family at Barnbow Hall by relationship as well as friendship.

It was from this hospitable house that the religious, attired simply as ladies in the world, set out on horseback to take possession of Dolebank ; and in the house of the institute at York the memory of Sir Thomas Gascoigne is still revered as the founder of the work, which, after being tossed by many a rude blast, has nevertheless weathered the storm.

When Oates’s plot broke out, Sir Thomas was denounced by a man named Bolron, and accused of conspiring against the king. This Bolron had been clerk or steward of his coal-pits, and had been brought up at his expense. Being dismissed for repeated robberies, although still treated with kindness by the master he had injured, he declared that he would be revenged.

Sir Thomas was apprehended late at night, July 7, 1679, on this man’s information, and carried prisoner to London, being then eighty-five years of age. He was committed to the Tower, where he suffered severely

* *Quatre Portraits de Femmes. Episodes des Persécutions d’Angleterre.* Firmin-Didot, 1895.

from cold and prison hardships. It was six months before he appeared before the tribunal, on February 11. He stood at the bar with a courageous and dignified bearing, and in presence of the court made a large sign of the cross. His deafness had been increased by the rigours of his captivity, so that it was with difficulty he was made to understand that he must declare whether he was innocent or guilty. "Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," answered the old man, "I am innocent." One of his granddaughters, Mrs Ravenscroft, stood by him during the trial and acted as his interpreter. She pleaded for a postponement of the proceedings to allow time for the arrival of witnesses from Paris, but this was refused. After a long trial and when numerous credible witnesses had totally destroyed the characters of the informers, the jury yielded to the overwhelming evidence in the prisoner's favour, and returned a verdict of "not guilty." Sir Thomas's assembled friends pressed round him to make known the acquittal. Prepared for the worst and mistaking their words he thought the verdict had been adverse, and answered, "Yes, yes; I did believe it. God forgive them. Let us pray for them."

After being restored to liberty Sir Thomas Gascoigne wished to have nothing more to do with worldly affairs, and retired to the Benedictine monastery at Lambspring, near Hildesheim, in Germany, where his brother was abbot. There he lived in peacefulness and prayer until 1689, and died at the age of ninety-four.

Lady Tempest, one of his daughters, was also a sufferer for the faith. Imprisoned in York Castle, brought to trial and threatened with being burnt alive

she passed through all these troubles as a worthy child of her father. She was by nature so timid that from afar the thought of a violent death terrified her ; but, as it is said in a narrative of the time, “ God fails not to help His own in His own time,” and when Lady Tempest was brought before her judges she astonished them by her animation and courage. Far from dreading death she desired it. She was acquitted, and, like her father, wished to spend the rest of her life in the cloister, but while preparing to join her sisters in the Benedictine monastery at Cambrai she died, in 1684.



III

The Catholic women—Those imprisoned at York—Mrs Gifford—Dorothy Lawson—Her charity—Her house in a Catholic centre—Agatha Vaughan—Her courage—The English Nuns—The eleven Bedingfields—Cecily Arundel—The Benedictines of Ghent and Charles II

THE example of Lady Tempest, the brave daughter of a line of confessors, is by no means unique. The Catholic women of England were under Charles II what they had been under Elizabeth and the first Stuarts. Unconscious of their own heroism they bore, for themselves and those belonging to them, all the miseries and horrors of persecution without repining or failing under its crushing and continuous weight.

Among them, the fellow-countrywomen of Margaret Clitheroe, the martyr of York, were pre-eminent. A great number of them, wives and daughters of the principal gentry of the county, were thrown into the prison of the Ousebridge at York. The dungeons of this prison were inundated when the

river rose with the incoming tide ; the prison fare was miserably poor and insufficient, and most of the prisoners bore names which had resounded on the battle-fields of the civil war, where those of their race had fought and bled for the sovereign so unmindful of faithful and devoted service.

But the women who passed thus suddenly from the comforts of a refined existence to the privations of a noisome prison all remained true and steadfast to the faith, while some, mounting to a still higher level, practised heroic virtue in the midst of their trials. One of these was the wife of Richard Gifford of Chillington, thrown into prison and deprived of her fortune on account of her religion. "She spent much of her time in prayer ; she was also exceedingly charitable to poor and needy persons, and having some little skill in surgery dressed most loathsome sores of the poorest persons who came frequently unto her, and she would oftentimes rise in the night when it was most bitter cold to attend the sick who had sent for her. She had prayed to God that she might have one daughter a religious and one son a priest, which petition was granted her. Her son Edward entered the Society of Jesus, and her daughter Joyce or Jocasta, taking the name of Ursula in religion, became an Augustinian nun at Louvain. Another of her sons living in Rome became a knight of Malta. These were the fruits of that worthy matron's prayers."*

Another admirable woman was Dorothy Lawson, who also belonged to one of those old Yorkshire families so splendid in their courageous and entire

* *Records*, v, 428, 429.

devotion to the faith. Her father was Sir Roger Constable Lawson, and in 1597 she married Roger, eldest son of Sir Ralph Lawson of Brough. He died in 1613 or 1614, from which time she wholly devoted herself to the care of her children and to the needs, spiritual and temporal, of her dependants and neighbours. She built a house at a place called St Anthony's on the banks of the Tyne, where in Catholic times a picture of the saint had been "decently placed in a tree for the comfort of seamen." At the end of the house, opposite to the water, she caused to be made the sacred name of Jesus, large in proportion, that it might serve the mariners instead of St Anthony's picture. In the chapel of this house mass was said daily, and evensong about four in the afternoon, with the Litany of Loreto, to recommend to the sacred Virgin's custody the safety of her house, and a *De profundis* for the faithful departed; between eight and nine at night was said the Litany of the Saints, at which all the servants were present. On festival days they also heard mass and evensong, and when there was not a sermon in the morning there was usually a Catechism in the afternoon, to which her neighbours' children were called with her own household. On great feasts the ceremonies of the Church were observed with every solemnity, and at Easter there were a hundred communions made in this little sanctuary, which was a centre of religious life and peace amid the troubles of that perilous time. Mrs Dorothy Lawson was a most generous benefactress to the fugitive and imprisoned priests, ever hospitable to those whom she could find to shelter beneath her roof, and visiting those who were in prison. There were three

priests imprisoned for some time in the gaol at Newcastle, to whom this charitable woman was an angel of consolation, and she was besides unwearied in succouring any poor or sick and afflicted persons.

After the death of this holy woman her confessor, Father Palmes, "heard most melodious music," and writes of it thus: "[it was] like that of the Franciscan friars at St Omers, but now sweetly singing the Office of the Dead which I had often heard from the convent of the English Seminary. Nor can I allege any public reason hereof, except the peculiar devotion wherewith she honoured the seraphical patriarch [St Francis]." The same occurrence was noticed at the death of "her virtuous and dear sister," Lady Fairfax of Gilling.

Another noble Catholic of those days was Agatha Berington, wife of Richard Vaughan of Courtfield near Ross in Herefordshire. Their chaplain, Father James Richardson, had much to suffer for the faith and priesthood; and in the beginning of 1689, in the winter season, lay concealed in the woods for ten days and nights, and being hunted by a furious mob, was sometimes obliged to climb trees, thus with great difficulty eluding the pursuivants. Mrs Vaughan of Courtfield, being afraid to trust the knowledge of Father Richardson's hiding-place to any of her servants, courageously proceeded alone, in the dead of night, through the intricacies of woods beset by military and rough men in order to supply him with the necessaries of life. For seven weeks more he hid in a disused lime-kiln.* Meantime Mr Vaughan, being a staunch Catholic and therefore a marked man,

* *Records*, v, 893.

saw his house attacked and plundered by an armed mob led by a neighbouring parson.

Few families in England have given so many subjects to the Church and religious orders as the Vaughans of Courtfield, one of whom, a grandson of these confessors for the faith, Richard and Agatha, is our own Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

By the side of these wives and mothers who, in the embowered seclusion of many an old manor-house, served the Church at the peril of their lives, a place must be given to the young English maidens who, in the peaceful shelter of the monastic houses of France or Flanders, devoted themselves to lives of prayer and penance on behalf of their unhappy country.

Numerous as religious vocations had previously been, they were no less so under Charles II. The family of Sir Thomas Gascoigne, as we have seen, furnished a large contingent to the English convents on the continent; and in one of the families allied to this, namely, the Bedingfields of Oxburgh, ten of the eleven daughters entered the religious life. The one who married, on becoming a widow joined her daughter at the English convent of Canonesses Regular of St Augustine at Bruges, the daughter being novice-mistress to her mother.*

These eleven sisters all appear to have been women of sterling character. Born and brought up in the midst of trials, they retained through life the strong imprint of their early training. One of them, Magdalen, prioress of the Carmelites at Dusseldorf, was the friend and adviser of Philip, Count Palatine of the Rhine, founder of the monastery of which she

* *St Mary's Convent, York*, p. 55.

was prioress; another, Winifred, superior of the English Virgins at Munich, united to a singularly open and generous disposition talents of a very high order. She was frequently consulted by the Elector of Bavaria, who said of her that she would have made an admirable prime minister. Frances, the youngest, governed with great wisdom the house of the Institute of Mary at York, where, in spite of the dangers around them and continual alarms, the religious, in the ordinary dress of women of the world, carried on their work of education with the greatest advantage to the Catholics of that part of the country. We have related elsewhere* the dangers which more than once threatened this foundation, and the manner in which Frances Bedingfield, its prudent and courageous superior, overcame them.

One of the great English religious of this period was Cecily Arundel, the dearly-loved daughter of the Lord Arundel of Wardour, so long and unjustly imprisoned in the Tower. The portrait of Cecily in her court dress hangs on the walls of Wardour Castle, bearing witness to the radiant beauty of the gifted girl who exchanged all that the world most prizes for the life of a Poor Clare at Rouen, a life of poverty and prayer. There she died at the age of eighty-two.

The unshaken loyalty which, as we have seen, pervaded all ranks of the English Catholics, maintained its strong vitality in the seclusion of the cloister. Charles II, while in exile, knew the community of English Benedictines at Ghent. When he was about to embark for England, at the Restoration, this community placed a considerable sum of money at his

* *Quatre Portraits de Femmes.*

disposal, he, in return, promising to assist them in founding a monastery of their order at Dunkirk. When settled on the throne, however, he promptly forgot his engagements. The abbess wrote to remind him of them ; and, as her letters remained unanswered, she came to London, accompanied by her chaplain, to see the king. He ended by yielding to her representations, and promised to give a certain sum annually to the monastery. It was paid for four years, and then ceased altogether.*



IV

The Converts—Elizabeth Turner—Elizabeth Shirley—Elizabeth Godwin instrumental in a conversion related by Father Waldegrave—A case of Providential intervention.

BESIDES these daughters of Catholic families who from the cradle had been accustomed to see the good things of this world—fortune, security, life itself, so lightly valued in comparison with the possession of the faith—there is another group, perhaps equally worthy of our admiration, the converts, whose steadfastness to their convictions cost them heavy sacrifices.

One of these was Mrs Turner, whose maiden name was Cheseldine, of Branstone, Leicestershire, the wife of an Anglican minister and a woman of great intelligence and uprightness of mind. Hearing in the religious discussions around her great diversities of opinion on important matters of doctrine, she began to doubt the truth of Anglicanism, its power to teach definitely, and consequently its right to teach at all.

* *West Grinstead, et les Caryll*, par Max de Trenqualeón, i, 437.

Not having the means in a secluded country parsonage of studying for herself the questions in which she was interested, she charged her two sons, Edward and Anthony, who were students at Cambridge, to endeavour by every possible means to discover for her which was the true religion. Edward conscientiously acquitted himself of the task enjoined on him, procured a number of theological and controversial books, Protestant as well as Catholic; and, after a careful study of them, communicated to his mother his conviction that the Catholic religion was the only true one.

On examining her son's reasons for this conviction, Mrs Turner found them so sufficient that she begged him to complete his work by putting her into communication with a priest for further instruction. To do so was not an easy matter. The Catholics, surrounded as they were by spies and informers, concealed with the utmost care the existence of their priests, to do so being a matter of life and death to the priest, and of fortune, liberty and often life, to those who gave him shelter. They had, moreover, an only too well-grounded fear of false brethren and of false conversions; and the position of Elizabeth Turner, as the wife of an Anglican minister who was known to be a violently bigoted Protestant, was in itself a reason for extreme caution if not for suspicion. Thus for a long time all Edward Turner's efforts on his mother's behalf failed by reason of the carefulness of the Catholics to keep their own secrets, until Father Michael Alford, a Jesuit who was hiding in that neighbourhood, heard of the anxious search that the mother and son were making, and believed

in their sincerity.* He entered into communication with them, and Mrs Turner, in spite of her weak health, walked long distances in the depth of winter to receive instruction from the father and to make her abjuration. Shortly afterwards, on her refusal to attend the Protestant service, her husband discovered her change of religion; and then began a daily martyrdom which only ended with her life. Insulted, ill-treated, overwhelmed with reproaches and often with blows, she bore all bravely and patiently; but her sufferings soon terminated in her death. Both her sons entered the Society of Jesus. Edward, the elder, died in prison in London. Anthony, as we have seen, was put to death with four of his brethren in religion at Tyburn June 20, 1679.

The conversion of another Elizabeth, early in the seventeenth century, did not cost the convert so dear. She was the daughter of a gentleman of Derbyshire, and when but twenty years old the charge of keeping house for her brother, Sir George Shirley, devolved upon her. He was as ardent a Catholic as she was a determined Protestant, and it is not unlikely that the more zealous than judicious endeavours of her brother and his friends to rescue her from schism helped to confirm her in it more deeply than before. But her conversion, which the arguments of cultivated and well-informed men had failed to effect, was brought about by a poor beggar woman who chanced

* Michael Alford, born in 1587, died 1652, at St Omers. He spent several years at Naples, devoting himself to the spiritual needs of the English seamen and traders there. Arrested under Charles I, he was liberated at the entreaty of Queen Henrietta Maria.

to be passing through the village. Mistress Shirley was in want of some "incale" or tape for household use, and finding that this woman could weave it, engaged her to make the required quantity, remaining with her part of the time to give directions. The poor woman, supposing the young lady to be a Catholic, presently began to relate to her a strange thing which had happened in her own county, Derbyshire, saying she knew well all the parties.* "A poor woman being taken ill in labour, the neighbours, and amongst them the parson's wife, came to attend her; and she, suffering very much, called aloud upon our Blessed Lady to pray for her. Upon this the parson's wife forbade her to call any more upon that name, and threatened that if she did so she would be left alone; but the poor woman still continued to cry, "Blessed Virgin Mary, help me." The parson's wife, very angry, took all the neighbours away with her, and left the poor woman alone for half an hour; thinking her then sufficiently punished and that she would no more call on our Blessed Lady, they returned. Great, however, was their surprise to see the poor woman lying quietly, with her new-born babe wrapped up beside her; and when the minister's wife questioned her, she answered that the Lady to whom she had called for help had come to her assistance, and having wrapped up the child and placed it beside her had vanished." Mistress Shirley happened to know the place spoken of, as well as some of the persons named, and answered that perhaps there was some deceit in all this; but the beggar confirmed it more fully, and said that some who were present were now wholly turned

* We copy the account from *Records*, v, 477.

from their new religion, and could never more be induced to go to church. From this and other things she related, the lady became greatly troubled, yet not choosing to open her mind to any one, she secretly studied Catholic books, which before she never would open, in the hope, as she afterwards acknowledged, of finding something in them to cavil at, so that she might contentedly remain in her former belief; but God in His infinite goodness moved her more and more, until she sought for an opportunity to be reconciled, and so became a Catholic. After this she went abroad, and entered the Augustinian convent at Louvain.*

The foregoing is not the only example of a conversion attended by singular and providential circumstances. In such troubled times as those the history of which we are relating, the intervention of Providence is perhaps more apparent than in seasons of calm, as if souls exposed to unusual storms and tempests had a right to special and unusual assistance.

Elizabeth Godwin was the daughter of James Godwin, Esq., of Wells, who, for the love of God, refused great appointments which he might have had, because he feared in them to be called upon to do things contrary to the faith, for which also he had endured much persecution and also imprisonment. There lived also in the same town of Wells a Protestant youth of seventeen or eighteen years old, who, notwithstanding his bringing up, had a strong attraction towards the old religion. He was often seen to go into the church and pray before the old images

* Communicated from Records at St Scholastica's Abbey, Teignmouth. *Records*, v, 478.

that had remained there from the former time; also he would always make a cross before all his writings, although he had no acquaintance with any Catholic. Happening one day to see Elizabeth Godwin alone in her father's garden, he went to her and asked if he might speak with her. She refused; upon which he said she was bound in conscience to let him, as it was on matters that concerned the salvation of his soul. Upon this she allowed him to join her in the garden; and he with an afflicted mind disclosed his troubles and anxieties in regard to his religion and the alarm he was in at the thought of dying as a Protestant, ending by entreating her, for the love of God, to help him with all speed to see a priest. At length, after many hindrances and difficulties, she procured him his heart's desire. He was secretly received into the Church in her father's house; and the priest who received him said mass at daybreak, no one else assisting at it but Elizabeth and the neophyte. Shortly afterwards the latter left England for St Omers, where he entered the Society of Jesus and attained to eminent sanctity. Elizabeth Godwin, the instrument of his conversion, took the veil in the monastery of the English Augustinians at Louvain.*

A conversion effected by Father Francis Waldegrave may also be classed amongst those in which the action of divine Providence is plainly manifested. Once on returning from a journey he inquired if all were well in the neighbourhood, and on being told that they were, he replied, "It is strange if no one wants my assistance." While he said this word was brought him that a certain man, utterly devoid of

* *Records*, v, 975.

religion and guilty of various crimes, lay dying. "Then," said the father, "this is the person I have to visit," and instantly sent a Catholic woman to see in what disposition he was. After the first salutation she asked what faith, as a dying man, he wished to profess, seeing that hitherto he had had no religion. Upon which he said, "And what religion do you acknowledge as the true one?" To which she replied, "The Catholic faith is the only true faith." "Then," said the dying man, "send, I beseech you, for Father Francis Waldegrave." The man's sons, hearing this, swore they would stab the father if he came into the house. Nothing daunted, Father Waldegrave flew to the assistance of the dying man, and soon brought him into such good dispositions that, with many tears, he besought God to give him three days to bewail his sins and make some reparation to his neighbours for the scandal he had given. God granted his petition, and when the three days were ended the reconciled sinner peacefully surrendered his soul.*

In other ways, also, divine Providence apparently intervened in aid of the faithful. A Catholic gentleman, who was cruelly persecuted for his religion, put aside in a separate purse the money he had to pay in fines as a recusant, always writing down the sums periodically paid out. After some time, on counting the contents of the purse, he found to his amazement that, notwithstanding the disbursements, there was no diminution of the original amount.†

* *Records*, v. 387.

† *Records*, v. 319.

V

A Catholic family under the penal laws—Edmund Plowden (under Elizabeth) refuses to apostatize—Hiding-places in the old manor—Francis Plowden : his trials—Religious vocations—The Plowdens at St Germain—Old account books : habits of mystery—Persecution by contempt—Catholics after the Emancipation—They gradually lay aside their habits of timid reserve.

As an example of every-day life among English Catholics under the penal laws we will mention that of the Plowdens of Plowden Hall in Shropshire. Not that theirs is more remarkable or interesting than that of a multitude of other families as ancient, as much tried and as faithful, but because from personal circumstances we have been able to examine its old archives, and, in perusing them, to follow its experiences step by step through the sanguinary years of Elizabeth and James I, and the more obscure but almost equally cruel period which ensued.

The old mansion, which has been the home of so many faithful generations, stands on the picturesque borders of Wales in a deep valley surrounded by hills covered with woods of oak and beech trees. The present building dates from the reign of Elizabeth only, but the surrounding domain has belonged to the Plowden family from the time of the Norman conquest. From hence it was that Roger de Plowden in the twelfth century set out for the siege of St John of Acre, where, as a reward for his valour, King Philip of France granted him the right to quarter three fleurs-de-lys on his coat of arms ; and it was from this same sequestered valley that, in darker days, the

descendants of this crusader went to seek on a foreign shore liberty to bring up their children in the faith of their forefathers.

When the Elizabethan persecution broke out the head of the Plowden family was Edmund, member of Parliament under Queen Mary, a man of great intelligence and noble character, who ranks as one of the eminent legists of the country. His bust may be seen in the law courts of the Temple, and a portion of the building is called by his name. Elizabeth knew his worth ; she also knew that he was a fervent Catholic, but offered him the post of Lord Chancellor of England if he would consent to give his adhesion to the new religion. Edmund Plowden refused. In his letter to say that he does so he writes, "I have no reason for abandoning the Catholic religion in which your majesty and myself were brought up. I shall never approve the persecution of those who belong to it. I should incur your majesty's displeasure before a week had passed did you persist in your intention to persecute those who profess the Catholic faith.*

This whole-hearted devotion to the old religion has lived on through the generations of whom Edmund Plowden was the ancestor. It was he who rebuilt the family mansion as it now stands, and, foreseeing evil days to come, he had several carefully concealed hiding-places constructed in various parts of the building. In one of these a priest was concealed for six weeks, during which time the pursuivants were watching the house within and without.

The family records bear witness to the numerous vexations and annoyances to which the fidelity of the

* *Records of the Plowden Family.* By Barbara Plowden. 1887.

Plowdens subjected them. Edmund was summoned for denying the spiritual supremacy of the queen, again for having spoken in condemnation of the cruelties of Henry VIII, and again and again for protection afforded to suffering recusants ; all these misdemeanours being punished by heavy fines.

When, in 1581, at the trial of Father Edmund Campion a group of Catholic gentlemen with Edmund Plowden at their head entered the hall, the judges, unwilling that the irregularities of their proceedings should be witnessed by a lawyer of his repute, compelled him to withdraw.

The descendants of this courageous son of the Church followed in his footsteps. Francis Plowden, who died in 1652, was much impoverished by the crushing fines exacted for his religion, and, added to these, his persecution by the Puritans for his loyalty to the royal cause. For this his house was pillaged and his property sequestrated, but his farmers and tenants, all of whom were devotedly attached to him and his family, aided by all means in their power those so ready to succour others in time of need. Dame Plowden was renowned for her skill and charity in tending the poor and sick around her.

Thomas, the priest and Jesuit brother of Francis, was arrested in London for the exercise of his ministry, but was subsequently set at liberty at the intercession of Queen Henrietta Maria.

As was the case with all the old Catholic families of the time, the Plowdens furnished a large contingent to the religious orders. The daughter of the royalist, Francis, became an Augustinian nun at Louvain, and later on three of her brothers in succession gave up

their right of inheritance to enter the Society of Jesus, in which all filled posts of importance.

The old letters and account books of the family, carefully handed down to the present day from father to son, reveal the habits of reserve and mystery which a long and cruel persecution had of necessity formed in the English Catholics. The children, writing to their parents from the college at St Omers, sign themselves under borrowed names to escape the consequences of the law forbidding the education of Catholic children "beyond seas." Also in his private account books the master of Plowden Hall never alludes to his Jesuit brothers but under their assumed names.

At the fall of the Stuarts, in 1688, we find Francis Plowden at St Germains with James II, attached to the king's household. His wife, granddaughter of Lord Stafford, was maid of honour to Queen Mary Beatrice of Modena, and her children were brought up with Prince James, who was always called by the adherents of the house of Stuart the Prince of Wales.*

The head of the family returned to England, and it is his account books and those of his son, methodically kept day by day, which initiate us into the daily life of a Catholic country gentleman under William III and the first Hanoverian kings of England.

William Plowden having refused to swear allegiance to one whom he regarded as an usurper, his six horses were seized under a regulation which forbade a Papist to possess a horse worth more than £5 sterling.

With the exception of petty vexations of this kind,

* James, son of James II and Mary Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Modena, afterwards called the Chevalier St George.

he and his son seem to have been allowed to live in comparative tranquillity. The era of sanguinary persecutions was past, and the Catholics of England entered on a new phase of existence, obscure and galling. Banned by society, shut out from every public employment, they endured the dull oppression of forced inactivity and of contempt in place of the active persecution which had required their blood: a life narrowed, repressed, isolated and despised, harder to many than the swifter martyrdom of death. Even if it chanced that at a social gathering of any kind one or more Catholics were among the guests, the host felt himself obliged to apologize for the circumstance to the rest of the company. The hatred and suspicion which pursued them rendered it impossible for them to take any leading part even in the affairs of their immediate neighbourhood; the impoverished state of their fortunes, ruined by fines and confiscations, and the necessity which compelled them to seek abroad the education as Catholics, which was denied them in their own country—all combined to create an insurmountable barrier between them and their neighbours.

The Plowden account books show us the parents often going to visit their children in the convents of France and Flanders or at the colleges of St Omers and Bruges; having masses said on the anniversaries of their dead relations; regularly maintaining at their old manor house a chaplain, whose customary garb was that of a layman, and who was the friend and adviser of all the family; meeting from time to time at other Catholic houses in the neighbourhood, to whose inmates they were bound by oneness in faith

and in the trials consequent upon it ; in short, spending their lives in the compulsory obscurity of the last century with the same calm and simple fortitude as they had shown under the active persecution of more troublous times.

After two centuries of such an existence as this it can be no matter for surprise that, when at last the hour of deliverance came, the English Catholics found it difficult to shake off the habits of mystery and reserve learnt in so hard a school. There is something very pathetic in the attitude of these men of a glorious past, who at the time of the "Catholic Emancipation" in 1829 were like captives long confined in chains and darkness suddenly restored to freedom and the light of day. Only by degrees did they learn to lift up their heads as free citizens of a free country and forget the bonds, humiliations and perils of their long years of adversity.*

Thanks be to God those dreary years are ended, though some still among us were born before their close. But now, in their recovered peace and freedom, the descendants of the "recusants" remember with deep gratitude at what incalculable and unstinted cost their ancestors, the persecuted and despised Papists, preserved and handed down to them the ancient faith which it is their dearest privilege to possess.

* In his *Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman* Mr Wilfrid Ward has a most interesting chapter on "The English Papists," giving a summary of their history during the times of persecution and the first half of the present century. Vol. i, 144.

CHAPTER X

END OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES II—FATE OF THE PERSECUTORS

I

Reaction of public feeling—Shaftesbury is discredited—He is imprisoned, judged, set at liberty—His alarms—He dies in Holland.

LINGARD, whose testimony we have so often quoted, observes, after relating the death of Archbishop Plunkett, the last victim sacrificed to the imposture of Oates's plot, “the day of retribution was now rapidly approaching, and the storm which had so long raged against the Catholics was about to burst on the heads of their oppressors.”

A change gradually took place in public opinion, and this time it was permanent. The first to feel its effect was Shaftesbury, the chief instigator and manipulator of the pretended conspiracy. His intense hatred of the Catholics, his incessant efforts to foment religious bigotry, and, above all, his determined and persistent endeavours to procure the exclusion of the Duke of York from the succession to the throne, ended by wearying the patience and offending the good sense of the nation. The perfectly correct attitude of the duke, and the remembrance of the services he had rendered his country produced a reaction in his

favour. The king, although he had allowed his brother to be exiled, joyfully availed himself of this improved state of feeling, recalled the duke, whose exile was the work of Shaftesbury, and deprived that formerly all-powerful minister of his functions.

But Shaftesbury made one more determined effort for the exclusion of the Catholic heir from the throne, and produced so dangerous an amount of excitement in the metropolis that a fresh rebellion seemed imminent. Then the king, roused to energetic measures, suddenly in 1681 dissolved Parliament by an act of royal authority, declaring that its illegal proceedings were endangering the monarchy itself. Shaftesbury was accused of treason and committed to the Tower, being accompanied thither by the yells and insults of the mob whose evil instincts and fanatical passions he had so long flattered and encouraged.

Thanks to the weakness of his judges, this man, who had brought so much dishonour on his master's reign, was set at liberty. But all his influence was gone; and he who had shown such utter disregard of the sufferings of others was now, himself, a prey to abject fear. The unexpected energy shown by the king surprised and alarmed him; and with a meanness worthy of his former arrogance he attempted to make overtures to the Duke of York, feeling that, in spite of all his relentless manœuvres to prevent it, the duke would succeed to the throne.

James received with reserve these advances made by his greatest calumniator, but sent an answer characteristic of his own generosity of character. "Though Lord Shaftesbury has been the most bitter of all my enemies, all his offences

will be forgotten whenever he becomes a dutiful subject of His Majesty.”*

The earl did not pursue the attempt. Leaving his own house he concealed himself in different parts of the city, and, still intriguing, did his utmost to induce the Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles II, to revolt, and the Earl of Essex and others to take up arms in his favour. He was disappointed in his treasonable designs, and, dreading discovery, disguised himself as a Presbyterian minister and embarked at Harwich for Amsterdam. There, broken down by anxiety, vexation and, it may be, remorse, he expired in January, 1683, alone and forgotten, about two months after his departure from England, where for years his unprincipled proceedings, whether to promote his personal advantage or to satisfy his fanatical bigotry, had carried death and desolation into so many peaceful homes.



II

Oates is discredited—Imprisoned at Newgate—His trial and sentence—Is released and pensioned by William III.

As for those who were Shaftesbury’s instruments in his persecution of the Catholics, most of them, like their chief, came to miserable ends. We have seen with what incomprehensible credulity judges and juries accepted the lying depositions of Titus Oates; but a time came when the common sense of the people recovered its balance, and towards the end of the reign of Charles II when a reaction took place in favour of the Duke of York, Oates was arrested and

* Lingard, iii, 30.

imprisoned for his slanders against the prince whom all henceforth acknowledged as their future sovereign. Meantime Charles II died, but after the accession of James II the prosecution of his calumniator was resumed.

We are told by Lord Macaulay,* whom no one will accuse of partiality towards Catholics, that among the upper and middle classes Oates had lost all credit, the only partisans remaining to him being ignorant fanatics of the lowest dregs of the people, and that these made an attempt to release him from Newgate, where he was chained in one of the dungeons to which he had caused so many innocent men to be sent; but the despair to which their accuser gave way contrasted greatly with the calmness shown by his victims, conscious of their innocence, who had been consigned to the same abode of horror.

In the charges brought against Oates in the course of his trial particular stress was laid on his having accused the Jesuits of plotting to kill the king, and his story of their treasonable "consult" at the White Horse Tavern. On both these indictments he was convicted of perjury and his guilt proved beyond the possibility of doubt. The court, in passing judgement, lamented that he could not be made to suffer death for all the innocent blood his perjuries had caused to be shed. He was condemned to pay a fine of 1,000 marks on each indictment, to be stripped of his canonical habit as a minister of the establishment, to be twice publicly whipped from Aldgate to Newgate, and from Newgate to Tyburn, and to stand

* *Hist. of England*, Charles II, 229-31.

every year of his life five times in the pillory ; finally, he was to be imprisoned for the remainder of his life.

The first part of his sentence was carried out on May 18, 1686, when, facing the gallows at Tyburn, he stood in the pillory, with a paper inscribed with his crimes fastened over his head, and was pelted and jeered at by the crowd which had once applauded him as the saviour of the monarchy, but now beheld in him an object unworthy of anything but derision and contempt.

He remained in prison until the revolution of 1688 which drove King James II from his throne. William of Orange set him at liberty, and allowed him a pension of £5 a week from the government. He died in obscurity in 1702.

William Bedloe, his chief accomplice, had died at Bristol in 1680, cursing those who had suborned him to accuse innocent men. Before death his tongue protruded from his mouth, long, black and swollen, so that he could not draw it in again. James Bedloe died also at Bristol the same year, cursing the Earl of Shaftesbury as having caused his brother's damnation and, as he feared, his own also. Dr Tonge died in 1681, in the house of a man named College, of starvation and eaten up with vermin.*



III

Chastisements which often follow persecutors—Examples.

MOREOVER, it was noticed with awe at the time, by others as well as Catholics, that if crime is not always punished nor virtue always rewarded in this

* *Records*, v, 74.

world, that nevertheless a certain number of calumniators and perjurors came to a mysterious and violent end. A poor woman of the name of Sellier was prevented by threats and violence from giving evidence in Mr Langhorne's favour, and was by the patrons of the plot put in the pillory and pelted by the mob. It was observed that nearly all who had a share in her accusation and sentence were manifestly chastised by God in the manner of their deaths; two of them went mad, and a youth who had been very active in casting stones at her suddenly fell sick and soon after died, unable to pronounce any other words than "Sellier, Sellier."*

Dugdale, when dying, driven mad by the furies of an evil conscience, with loud shrieks implored those who stood round his bed to "take away Lord Stafford." The end of Carstairs, too, was all horror and despair. He bade those near him to throw him into a ditch when he was dead, for that he was not fit to be put in consecrated ground.

The chief accuser of Father Penketh, on returning from the court where he had been to denounce him, was taken ill, and in ten days died with much contrition, confessing to all who visited him his grievous sin, and sending relief to the Catholics in prison, entreating them to pray for him. After his death his disconsolate father went and knelt at Father Penketh's feet, imploring his pardon in his son's name; and the good father freely gave it, and with many tears promised to pray for the young man's soul.†

The three accusers of William Plessington, priest

* Stonyhurst MSS., Angl., v, n. 100, quoted in *Records*.

† *Records*, v, 335.

and martyr, put to death at Chester, all died in strange ways shortly after his condemnation.* In Staffordshire a bigoted persecutor of the Catholics was struck blind when he was boasting of the sufferings he had caused them. Reeves, who denounced the venerable Nicholas Postgate, passed the remainder of his days in a state of terror, and ended by drowning himself.† One of the principal accusers of Father Lewis, the Welsh martyr, and the sheriff who presided at his execution both died suddenly a few weeks afterwards.‡

Our readers will remember the courageous charity of Dame Agatha Vaughan in securing the fugitive chaplain of Courtfield. On two different occasions the invaders of this ancient mansion met with swift punishment. One of these, a pursuivant, threatened to set the house on fire in his determination to find the hunted priest. Within a week this man's house from some unknown cause took fire and was burnt to the ground, and he himself died in the prime of life before the year was out. At another time when Courtfield was to be ransacked in the search for a priest, one man, eager for plunder, swore a terrible oath that he would reach it by swimming before the rest could do so by ferry-boat; he plunged into the river, which sucked him in, and so, in the sight of all, he miserably perished.

Without wishing to attach any exaggerated importance to these and similar incidents, we can understand their being noticed and commented on in the writings of the time in the same way that, after the dissolution of the monasteries, the popular mind had been impressed

* *Records*, 410.

† *Challoner*, ii, 215.

‡ *Records*, v, 929.

by the evils which so frequently pursued the spoilers and possessors of Church property.*

But what befel the king, who, in the judgement of history, bore so heavy a responsibility in the sanguinary drama we have been contemplating? Charles II comprehended more fully than his ministers and their vile instruments the full extent of the infamies he allowed to be perpetrated; and whatever his secret convictions of the truth of the Catholic religion may have been, they were stifled by the sensuality which held his will captive and deadened within him every noble and courageous sentiment. The end of his reign was troubled not by imaginary and fictitious plots, but by real and dangerous conspiracies, one of which aimed at dethroning him, either in favour of the Duke of Monmouth, his illegitimate son, or else of William, Prince of Orange, the son of his sister Mary, and the husband of his niece. The leaders in this conspiracy, Lord William Russell and Algernon Sydney, were executed in 1683.

From a moral point of view the state of society was appalling, the king's evil example exercising the most pernicious influence on the higher classes of his subjects. "There may have been other periods in our history in which immorality prevailed, but none in which it was practised with more ostentation or brought with it less disgrace." * In all classes habits of gambling, intemperance and profanity were rife, and, in the political world there prevailed falsehood, intrigue and corruption. Alone, in the seclusion of their dilapi-

* See Spelman's *History of Sacrilege*, 1661, recently republished by Hodges. London.

† Lingard, x, 56.

dated manors, the impoverished Catholic recusants maintained intact, together with the ancient faith, their inherited traditions of fortitude and honour, the fear of God and their own self-respect.

Disquieted by the discovery of one mischievous intrigue after another among his ministers, Charles hoped to purchase for himself a temporary respite by promising both parties the advantage each desired over the other, but intending to put off the fulfilment of either promise to a future and uncertain day. That day never came. On February 2, 1685, after a feverish and restless night the king rose early, but shortly afterwards fell on the floor insensible, stricken by paralysis. After the physicians had had recourse to bleeding and to the application of red-hot irons, he gradually recovered consciousness and the use of speech. But the improvement did not continue, and on the fourth day it became evident that dissolution was rapidly approaching.

In spite of all his vices Charles was beloved by his subjects. The announcement of his condition spread a gloom over the metropolis, and the report of his convalescence was received by the people with the ringing of bells and lighting of bonfires. When his danger became manifest crowds hastened to the churches to pray for his recovery, the service being repeatedly interrupted by the tears and sobs of the congregation.*

The moment the king had recovered his speech he asked for the queen, who came immediately and waited on him with the most affectionate attention. The Duke of York was also present, and five of the Anglican prelates remained constantly in attendance.

* Lingard, x, 52.

On the morning of February 5, Dr Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, warned the monarch of his danger, and read the office appointed for the visitation of the sick. “ When he came to the rubric respecting confession he paused—observed that it was a matter not of obligation but of choice, and, receiving no answer, asked whether the king repented of his offences against the law of God. Charles replied in the affirmative, and the prelate, having pronounced the usual form of absolution, asked if he might proceed to the administration of the sacrament. The king appeared to take no notice of the question, but Ken renewed the proposal, and Charles replied in a faint tone that there was still time enough. The elements were, however, brought and placed on a table, and the question was repeatedly asked by the bishop, who could extort no other answer from the dying man but that he would think of it.

“ Hitherto the Duke of York had been silent on the subject of religion. He knew not what course to pursue in a matter of so much delicacy and danger. By law the reconciliation of any individual to the Church of Rome was an act of high treason. No priest could be introduced to the king for that purpose whilst the room was crowded with lords, bishops and medical attendants. James had understood the evasive and reluctant language of his brother to Bishop Ken, and in the evening, having motioned to the company to withdraw to the other end of the apartment, he knelt down by the pillow of the sick monarch and asked if he might send for a Catholic priest. ‘ For God’s sake do,’ was the king’s reply; ‘ but,’ he added, ‘ will it not expose you to danger?’ James replied that he cared not for the danger, and, having despatched a trusty

messenger for Father Huddleston, the Benedictine, the same who thirty-five years before had waited on the king at Moseley after the battle of Worcester, stated aloud that the king required all present to quit the apartment with the exception of the Earls of Bath and of Feversham, as they were both Protestants, and their attendance was likely to prevent any sinister reports. In a short time Father Huddleston was brought in by a private door, and James introduced him to the king with these words, 'Sir, this worthy man once saved your life; he now comes to save your soul.''"*

To the father's inquiries Charles replied that it was his desire to die in the communion of the Roman Catholic Church, that he heartily repented of all his sins, and purposed, if God should spare him, to prove his sincerity by a thorough amendment of life. He then made his confession, received absolution and Extreme Unction. Father Huddleston had not with him the holy Viaticum, but a Portuguese priest belonging to the queen's private chapel went and brought it, and the king received it with great penitence and faith. After this had been administered Father Huddleston withdrew. Thus were the holy and charitable prayers, offered by so many martyrs from the "triple tree" of Tyburn for their guilty king, fully and mercifully granted.

Meanwhile, the exclusion of all but the duke and the two earls during three-quarters of an hour awakened suspicion.† The entrance and exit of the

* Lingard, x, 53, 54.

† "Chacun se regardait dans l'antichambre, et personne ne se disoit rien que des yeux et à l'oreille. La présence de Milord Bath et de

father had been witnessed by the queen's chaplains and attendants, and in a few days the fact was whispered throughout the palace.

When the lords, prelates and physicians were readmitted to the presence of the dying king, it became evident to all that a great moral change had taken place in him. He suffered the most distressing pain, but between the paroxysms his mind was calm and collected, and he spoke of his approaching death with composure and resignation. To the queen, who begged his forgiveness if she had ever offended him, he said that, on the contrary, it was he who must beg hers, which he did with all his heart, but that she had nothing with which to reproach herself. About two o'clock, looking on the duke, who was kneeling by the bedside, he took his hand and kissed it; and calling him the best of friends and brothers, desired him to forgive his harsh treatment of him, and prayed that God would grant him a long and prosperous reign. Towards seven o'clock he had the curtains drawn aside and the window opened, saying he wished to look for the last time on the light of the sun.

At eight the agony began, and at noon all was over. Charles II was fifty-four years of age, and died on February 6, 1685, having reigned twenty-five years.

Endowed with natural gifts of a very high order, Charles might have been not only a popular but a beneficent and prosperous monarch, had he not vitiated all his good qualities by indolence, love of pleasure and an insuperable antipathy to business or to effort

Milord Feversham, qui sont Protestants a un peu rassuré les évèques." From the narrative of Barillon in a letter to Louis XIV two days afterwards, quoted by Lingard, x, 54.

of any kind ; and above all by his lack of any fixed principles of morality or religion. His court was the most dissolute of any in Europe ; his financial embarrassments, chiefly the result of mismanagement and extravagance, were notorious ; and of his pecuniary transactions with the King of France no Englishman can think without shame. Moreover, during the reign of this ease-loving monarch were shed torrents of innocent blood.

And yet, strange to say, in spite of his vices, supineness and neglect, Charles never entirely lost the love of his people, in whose eyes he had never ceased to retain something of the halo of romance with which the perils of his youth and the days of Worcester and of Boscobel had invested him. To the impartial reader the hour when he attained a certain greatness was when, at the approach of death, he endeavoured in sincere penitence to make reparation, as far as in him lay, for the sins of his past life.

The widowed queen, Catherine of Braganza, remained in England for six years after the death of her husband, sometimes residing at her palace of Somerset House and sometimes at Hammersmith, where she had founded a religious community.* The fall of her brother-in-law, King James II, in 1688, was a great misfortune and grief to her.

William of Orange had no sooner taken possession of his father-in-law's throne than the persecution of the Catholics was renewed. The queen dowager keenly felt her isolation in a land where she was the only tolerated professor of a faith which she had seen

* The English Ladies of the Institute of Mary, founded by Mary Ward. The community remained at Hammersmith until 1781.

bring imprisonment, exile or death on most of her dearest friends and faithful servants, and earnestly desired to return to her native land. It was not, however, until March 30, 1692, that she was able to quit London, where, thirty years before, she had arrived full of happy confidence in her apparently brilliant future. Passing quickly through France, though pressed by Louis XIV to stay at Versailles on her way, she was met on entering Spain by an escort of Portuguese grandes of the highest rank, sent by her brother, Don Pedro. Her journey being interrupted by a serious illness, she did not reach Lisbon until January 20, 1693, when she was received with the most enthusiastic acclamations of joy. Her mother, Luiza de Guzman, and her elder brother, Alfonso, were dead; but Don Pedro, her second brother, was on the throne, and welcomed with tender affection the sister from whom he had been separated for a quarter of a century.

Queen Catherine lived twelve years after her return to Portugal, and these years were uncontestedly the happiest of her life. Treated with affection by her brother, Don Pedro, and Maria Sophia of Neubourg, his wife, and with love and respect by the people, who appreciated the prestige which the marriage of their princess with the King of England had given to Portugal, her happiness seemed after so many years of trial to unfold its perfect bloom in the bright sunshine of her native land. A ray of glory illumined the last few months of a life which had known so much humiliation. In 1705, Don Pedro being dangerously ill, Catherine was invested with the functions of regent of the kingdom and charged to maintain the war undertaken against Philip of Anjou, pretender to the

throne of Spain. As queen regent she proved herself a worthy daughter of Luiza of Braganza, whose political sagacity had secured stability to the tottering throne of her husband. The campaign directed by her was not only brilliant but productive of important results, and, in the space of a few months, her victorious troops had taken possession of several large and important towns.* She did not long survive the episode which revealed in the once-despised wife of Charles II a gifted statesman and a skilful commander, and died on the last day of the year 1705, at the age of sixty-seven years. Her kindness of heart was shown by the interest she continued to take in the country where she had suffered so much. She had kept in her service several of her English maids of honour, and continued the salaries of all her servants in England till the day of her death.†

When dying she bade her English physician support her, and said to him that in England she had been falsely accused of plotting to bring in her own religion, but that she had never sought more favour for it than was permitted her by her marriage articles; and added that she had never been a promoter of the French interest in England, and was grieved to think that the

* Strickland, *Queens of England*, iv, 507.

† Nor was she forgotten by faithful and loyal hearts in England. Pepys, in 1700, in a letter to his nephew in Portugal, desires him to "wait upon my Lady Tuke, one of the ladies attending my once royal mistress, our queen dowager, a lady for whom I bear great honour nor if she should offer you the honour of kissing the queen's hand would I have you omit, if Lady Tuke thinks it proper, the presenting of her majesty with my profoundest duty as becomes a most faithful subject." Quoted in Strickland, *Queens of England*, iv, 504.

French fashion in her brother's court would do England ill offices in Portugal.*

Catherine of Braganza survived her consort Charles II nearly twenty-one years. In spite of all she had suffered from his faithlessness she was devoted to his memory, and to the end of her life had a great number of masses sung every year for the repose of his soul.

For herself, after all the mortifications and disappointments which had darkened her firmament at noontide, the evening of her life was cloudless and its sunset glorious. Catherine of Braganza was prayed for in the liturgy of the Established Church of England, as queen dowager in the reigns of James II, William and Mary, and Queen Anne.



IV

Impression resulting from narrative.—Testimony of the Protestant historians, Campbell, Hume and others.—Words of Canning.—Ebbsfleet.—Words of Cardinal Perraud.—Conclusion.

CLOSE to Charles II and Catherine of Braganza we have seen on the steps of the throne, James, Duke of York, and his young and innocent wife, Mary Beatrice of Modena, who, at the age of fifteen had been brought into this the most corrupt court of Europe. All the attacks upon the Papists were aimed most especially at the Duke of York, whose conversion to the Catholic faith exposed him to the blind bigotry of the people. During his brother's reign he was, on this account, threatened, persecuted and exiled, in spite of the

* *Hist. Casa Real Portuguesa*, quoted by Strickland, *Queens of England*, iv, 508.

king's sincere affection for this "best of friends and brothers."

The subsequent history of James II does not belong to our narrative. Driven from his throne in 1688 by his son-in-law and the heartless daughter to whom he had ever been the kindest of fathers, he found a generous hospitality at St Germain. There he lived surrounded by a little court of exiles like himself, poor in everything but fidelity and honour. The brilliant court of Louis XIV, "*le Roi Soleil*," beheld as a pathetic vision the figure of this discrowned monarch, whose character was strengthened, matured, and purified by the stern breath of adversity. An impolitic ruler and an unfaithful consort when on the throne, James II, in poverty and exile, betrayed by his ungrateful daughters, driven from his kingdom by his subjects, bore with admirable resignation the loss of his realm and the defections and disappointments of every sort which attended his flight. He died in 1701, bequeathing his rights to his son. His widow, the beautiful and virtuous Mary Beatrice, survived him until 1718.

With the deaths of the grandsons of this royal couple, Charles Edward, Duke of Albany, "The young Chevalier," and his brother, Henry, Cardinal of York, the legitimate male line of the house of Stuart became extinct.*

Over two centuries have passed away since the drama we have been contemplating was enacted, and

* James, called "The Chevalier St George," son of James II and Mary Beatrice of Modena, married Clementine Sobieska. Of their two sons, Charles Edward married Louise de Stolberg, and died childless; Henry became priest, cardinal and Bishop of Frascati. The two brothers are buried in St Peter's at Rome.

the truth in regard to the scenes and chief actors in it is no longer smothered beneath the mountain of fiction, misapprehension and oblivion, where it lay buried for so long. This truth has for its interpreters Protestant historians as well as Catholic writers. The first impression which results from the study of this page of history is one of profound astonishment.

How was it that extravagant stories, full of incoherences and contradictions, and emanating from sources so corrupt, could have had sufficient weight to have sent so many innocent victims to their deaths? The answer seems to be that no bounds can be set to the aberrations of religious bigotry when adroitly flattered and stirred up by falsehood, hatred, rage and fear. "The hatred of the Roman Catholic religion" says Macaulay,* had become one of the over-ruling passions of the nation: it was as strong among the ignorant as among those who were Protestants from conviction." The most eminent Protestant historians agree with the Elector Palatine,† who, after studying the documents relating to the trial of the Jesuit fathers, tore them in pieces, exclaiming that the accusations they contained were absurd. Lord Campbell declares that this series of judicial murders is a greater disgrace to England than the massacre of St Bartholomew was to France.‡ Hume writes in the same sense, that the pretended plot was an affair which, for the honour of the nation, it would be better to bury in eternal oblivion, but the remembrance of which it is needful to preserve, not

* *Hist. of England*, Charles II.

† A Protestant prince, son of Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of James I who married the Elector Frederic. *Records*, v, 225.

‡ *Lives of the Chief Justices*, ii, 9.

only in order to maintain the truth of history, but also to warn posterity and mankind against falling into an error so shameful and so barbarous, for, in all history, it would be difficult to find a similar example of frenzy and delusion.* Echard, Madden, Green and others, all Protestants, are no less outspoken in their condemnation of what one of them calls a fable invented by unprincipled men and adopted by politicians who were weak-minded or corrupt.†

Finally, a hundred and fifty years later, on April 30, 1822, in a memorable session of Parliament, George Canning made a speech the result of which was to restore to the Catholic peers their ancient privilege of sitting in the House of Lords. In noble words he affirmed that the concordant judgment of history and posterity has stigmatized the pretended plot with the characters of perjury and fraud. Then calling to remembrance those who had been so unjustly despoiled of their hereditary privileges, "I believe," he exclaimed, the dying protestations of Lord Stafford, and I am bound according to all the principles of law and justice to believe in the innocence of the other peers who were accused with him.‡

In concluding this narrative it is impossible not to compare the past with the present. If the contemplation of the injustice and oppression which were the lot of Catholics under Charles II is distressing, the thought of the Catholic Church in the England of the present, extending her peaceful conquests in the light of day, fills the heart with gratitude and hope.

* Hume. *Hist. of England.* Charles II.

† Gardiner. *Introduction to the English History*, 159.

‡ *Journal of the House of Commons.* Canning's Speech.

Great indeed is the contrast between the period whose history we have briefly sketched and the glorious and equitable reign of the beloved queen whose diamond jubilee two years ago was celebrated by her people in all parts of the globe. Her reign, the longest in our history, has seen the revival and gradual development of Catholicism in this country, once so hostile to it. May not this fact be in great measure attributed to the powerful intercession of those brave and faithful ones who sowed in tears, and for the love of Christ, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, who suffered and died for His truth, and whose sufferings have been changed into blessings for the Church they loved even unto death, and for their country, once the Isle of Saints, which had their latest thought, their dying prayer?

We cannot better close these pages than in the words of confidence and holy gladness spoken by Cardinal Perraud to the Catholics of England at Ebbsfleet on September 12, 1897, the tercentenary anniversary of the landing of St Augustine, when, as the *Standard* newspaper informed its readers, a religious festival took place surpassing in magnificence anything of the kind since the reformation. Mass was solemnly celebrated in the open air, and the antiphon, *Deprecamur*, sung of old by Augustine and his monks as they approached King Ethelbert, was again chanted by the sons of St Benedict beneath the sky of England, and mingling with the sound of her engirdling waves.

On this occasion were assembled around Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, eighteen of our bishops with a multitude of priests, religious and

faithful laity of the resuscitated *Ecclesia Anglicana* of ancient days, with whom the sister Church of Gaul, ever generous and prompt in sympathy and succour, had come, in the person of her most illustrious prelate,* to rejoice and to gladden the family gathering by his presence and his words. In his sermon, after alluding to the “Alleluia victory” more than fourteen centuries ago, Cardinal Perraud continued, “And again shall this joyful acclamation resound to the utmost bounds of your immense empire: from the Thames to the Ganges, the Cape, Australia and the west. It will bid the world rejoice and thank God that the children of one Father, too long separated from Him, are again one with him and with each other, in charity and faith and truth. Alleluia!”

If this glorious vision is to be realized, we, to whom the inheritance of the ancient faith has been handed down at so great a cost, must prove ourselves worthy descendants of our heroic sires, the English “Recusants.”

* Cardinal Perraud is the successor of St Syagrius, bishop of Autun, whose hospitality to St Augustine and his companions, when on their way to England, was rewarded by Pope St Gregory with the Pallium for himself and his successors to that see.



APPENDIX

THE *Corporation Act* was passed in 1661. All corporate officers were required to have taken the sacrament of the Lord's Supper "according to the rites of the Church of England" within one year before their elections, and, upon being elected, to take the oaths of allegiance and of supremacy.

The *Test Act* was passed in 1673, with the object of preventing political power being placed in the hands of Papists. The title of the Act is, "An Act for preventing dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants." Under the provisions of the Act, all persons holding any office or place of trust, civil or military, or admitted to the king's or Duke of York's household, were to receive the sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England, and to make and subscribe the following declaration: "I, A. B., do declare that I believe there is not any *transubstantiation* in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or in the elements of bread and wine, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever."

The *Parliamentary Test* was imposed in the year 1678. The title of the Act is "An Act for the more effectual preserving the king's person and government, by disabling Papists from sitting in either House of Parliament." Under the Act, "No peer or member of the House of Commons shall sit or vote without taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and a declaration repudiating the doctrine of transubstantiation, the adoration of the Virgin and the sacrifice of the Mass. Peers and members offending are to be deemed and adjudged *Popish Recusants convict*, and are to forfeit £500," besides suffering numerous disabilities.

The *Act for Uniformity*, by the 34th section, re-enacts by

reference the penal clauses in the earlier Uniformity Act of the 2nd and 3rd Edward VI, c. 1, also incorporated into the 1st Elizabeth, c. 2. These include "the declaring or speaking anything in the derogation, depraving, or despising of the Book of Common Prayer, or of anything therein contained, or any part thereof," the punishment of which, for the third offence, is forfeiture of goods and chattels and imprisonment for life. Among other clauses included are the compelling attendance at parish churches, and the offence of "whoever shall willingly and wittingly hear or be present at any other manner or form of Common Prayer than is mentioned and set forth in the Book of Common Prayer." The 9th section contained, among others, the following declaration: I, A. B., do declare that I will conform to the liturgy of the Church of England as it is by law established." This declaration was required to be subscribed not only by every person in holy orders, but also by public and private schoolmasters, who were likewise required to take out a license from the bishop of the diocese under penalty of three months' imprisonment (for the first offence).

Extract from "An Act for declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, and settling the Succession of the Crown," (1689). "IX—And whereas it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant kingdom to be governed by a popish prince or by any king or queen marrying a Papist, the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, do further pray that it may be enacted that all and every person and persons that is, are, or shall be reconciled to, or shall hold communion with the See or Church of Rome, or shall profess the popish religion, or shall marry a Papist, shall be excluded, and be for ever incapable to inherit, possess or enjoy the crown and government of this realm and Ireland and the dominions thereunto belonging, or any part of the same, or to have, use, or exercise any regal power, authority or jurisdiction within the same; and

in all and every such case or cases the people of these realms shall be and are hereby absolved of their allegiance ; and the said crown and government shall from time to time descend to such persons, being Protestants, as should have inherited the same in case the said person so reconciled, holding communion, or professing, or marrying as aforesaid, were naturally dead.

“ X—And that every king and queen of this realm who at any time hereafter shall come to and succeed in the imperial crown of this kingdom shall, on the first day of the meeting of the first Parliament next after his or her coming to the crown, sitting in his or her throne in the House of Peers, in the presence of the Lords and Commons therein assembled, or at his or her coronation, before such person or persons who shall administer the coronation oath to him or her make, subscribe and audibly repeat the declaration mentioned in the statute made in the 13th year of the reign of King Charles II, intituled, ‘ An Act for disabling Papists from sitting in either House of Parliament.’ (See p. 2 *supra*).

“ XI—All which their majesties are contented and pleased shall be declared, enacted, and established by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled.”

[The above extracts are quoted from *The Student's Hume. Hist. of England.* Pp. 486, 487, 560, edition of 1871.]

The Dutch *Deliverer* (see p. 270 *supra*): “ Whatever advantage is said to have accrued to the cause of civil and religious liberty from the revolution of 1688, most certainly it brought nothing but persecution and despotic oppression to the homes, persons and property of the Catholic body. The double land-tax, the hundred pounds' reward for the discovery of a priest, the incapacity for purchasing land, the prohibition of keeping school and educating their own children, and the keeping of a single horse above £5 value, were a few of the bitter fruits which the Dutch deliverer bestowed on his

Catholic subjects. An inquest of jurymen, held at the sign of the Cock Inn, March 17, 1699, having found that the Jesuits of the English College at St Omers had a mortgage of £500 on part of Teddington Manor, Beds., belonging to the Earl of Cleveland, the commissioners under the great seal awarded with a due sense, forsooth, of British honour and of Protestant justice, that the money was forfeited to the crown." Dr Oliver's *Collectanea*: quoted in *Records*, v, 894.

An example of the working of the Test Acts (see an article by the Rev. T. E. Bridgett, C.S.S.R., in the *Month* for May, 1895): "John Towneley, of Lancashire, caused to be inscribed under his portrait in 1601 that about the 6th or 7th of Elizabeth, for professing the apostolical, Catholic, Roman faith, he was imprisoned, first at Chester Castle, then sent to the Marshalsea, then to York Castle, then to the block-houses in Hull, then to the Gatehouse in Westminster, then to Manchester, then to Broughton in Oxfordshire, then twice to Ely in Cambridgeshire. And so now, of seventy-three years old, and blind, is bound to appear and to keep within five miles of Towneley, his house. Who hath, since the statute of 23 Elizabeth (1581) paid into the exchequer £20 the month, and doth still; and that there is paid already above £5,000." "The authentic record of Mr Towneley will give some idea of the pressure put on our higher families to make them conform, at least externally, and the sufferings endured by those who had the courage to resist."

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